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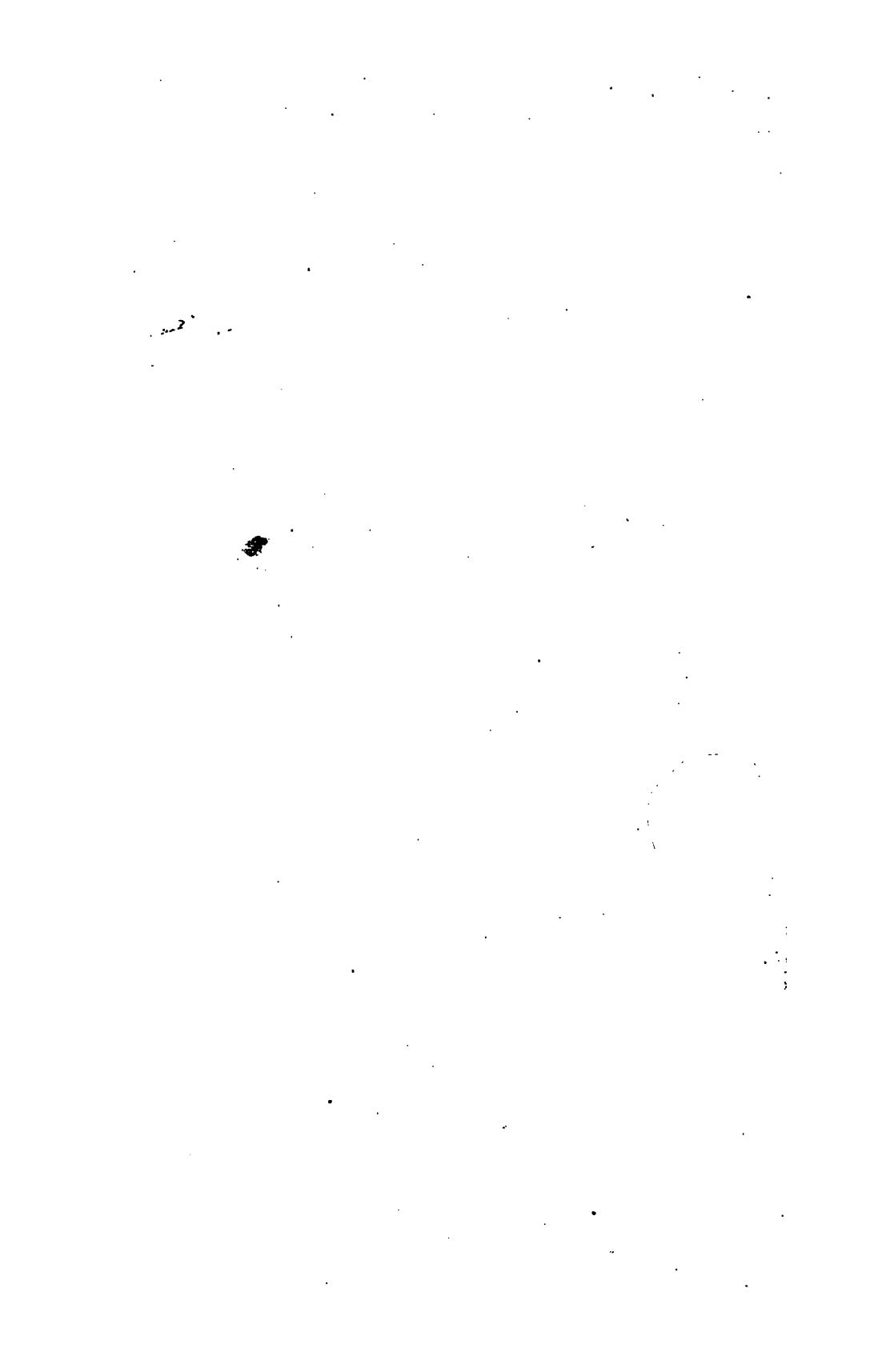
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THE HORSE TAKEN FRIGHT WITH FANNY.

Fatherless Family
of
A YOUNG LADY'S
First Entrance into Life.
Dedicated
Memoirs of
A LITTLE MENDICANT,
— (and) —
Her Benefactors.



MANCHESTER
Printed & Published by J. Gleare 191, Deansgate.

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FATHERLESS FANNY;

OR,

A YOUNG LADY'S

FIRST ENTRANCE INTO LIFE :

BEING THE

MEMOIRS OF A LITTLE MENDICANT

AND

Her Benefactors,

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE OLD ENGLISH BARON.

“The gentle maid, whose hapless tale
These melancholy pages speak ;
Say, gracious lady, shall she fail
To draw the tear adown thy cheek ?”

WALPOLE.

FOURTH EDITION.

Manchester:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. GLEAVE,
No. 191, Deansgate.

1822.

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Preface.

THIS Novel is one of the newest and most modern now extant, and is out of the common track of Novel writing : it is an attempt to unite the various merits and graces of the ancient romance and modern novel ; and, like history, represents human nature as real life. To attain this end, there is required a degree of the marvellous to excite the attention, and real manners of life to give an air of probability to the work, and to engage the heart in its behalf. The characters are admirably drawn and supported ; the diction polished and elegant ; and the whole so closely connected, as to keep the imagination of the reader continually alive to the subject before him.

Thus mankind are naturally pleased with what gratifies their vanity ; and vanity, like all other passions of the human heart, may be rendered subservient to good and useful purposes.

The reader is not, therefore, confused with the association of truth with fiction, although fiction is the basis of the story. The passion that awakens and gives energy to life, is alone painted in those colours which AURORA

gives to the morning, when all animated nature wakes to feast on the luxuriant fruits of Summer, when all is ecstasy, harmony, and joy.

“Venal orators, who are dissatisfied with their own situation, ever discover either vice or error in the most meritorious performances.” This production is submitted to the candour of a generous public, who ever censure with lenity, and reward with liberality.

It seemed to me that it was possible to compose a work upon the same plan, wherein these defects might be avoided; and the keeping, as in painting, might be preserved. But then I began to fear it might happen to me as to certain translators and imitators of Shakespeare—the unities may be preserved while the spirit is evaporated: however, I ventured the attempt, and read it to a circle of friends of approved judgment.



FATHERLESS FANNY.

CHAPTER I.

The Seminary.

IN one of those polite seminaries devoted to female instruction, with which the environs of London abound, lived Miss Bridewell, whose despotic sway within the limits of her own jurisdiction, was certainly equal to that of the most potent monarch in the civilized world, not excepting the great Napoleon himself. *Her* word was law—*her* nod was *fate*—and *her* approbation or displeasure settled the degree of consequence enjoyed by every individual that approached her. Miss Bridewell had been many years a preceptress of youth; so many years, that she began to entertain thoughts of changing her appellation of courtesy from *Miss* to *Mrs.* Still, however, this arrangement was delayed, and the juvenile title was now the only remains of youthful pretensions.—With increase of years, however, Miss Bridewell had the consolation of enjoying a proportionate increase of fortune. When she made her first *debut* as a governess, it was in a small house at Brompton, where a large board disclosed hers to be a *boarding school* for young ladies. Her talents as a schoolmistress, however, soon raised her from this honourable station, and she opened *Cannondale House* with all the *eclat* of modern splendour. Still, however, amongst the numerous scholars that crowded her highly esteemed *Seminary*, some *plebeian souls* would creep in. Scarcely could the immense sums their parents paid for their education reconcile the stately Miss Bridewell to the degradation of admitting them into her circle. The happy time at length

arrived, in which the flourishing state of Miss Bridewell's finances enabled her to form an *establishment* upon more exalted principles. Cannondale House was let at an enormous premium, besides an exorbitant rent, to a governess of a subordinate degree, who was glad of an opportunity of treading in the successful steps of her predecessor, and whose soul had not yet risen above the profitable task of teaching the children of *ambitious tradesmen*. The soaring mind of Miss Bridewell was not, however, so easily contented. Ladies of title, or at least of high family, were alone the object of her attention ; and the name of *establishment* was given to her seminary, as having a grander sound, and better suited to her exalted ideas. Indeed, ever since the establishment of the P—— of Wales, every petty family's arrangement has assumed that dignified appellation amongst the sons and daughters of *ton*. We all know, however, that there are many people of high rank, who are straitened in their circumstances, and whose *names*, although they may bestow *eclat*, will not support *expense*. Miss Bridewell soon found this, and it induced her to admit a few rich heiresses, as a great favour, into the happy group that formed her *establishment* ; and as she was a true disciple of the world, she bestowed her favours, which cost her *nothing*, in proportion as she received those from her pupils, that cost a *great deal*. The house Miss Bridewell inhabited was spacious and elegant, and possessed all the requisites of modern refinement. A *boudoir*, that indispensable apartment for a real fine lady ; a drawing room, dining parlour, with breakfast parlour and study, were the apartments devoted to the use of the governess ; whilst a very spacious room, to which she had given the appropriate title of '*la salle des sciences*,' was occupied by the young ladies during their hours of improvement. The house itself stood in a shrubbery, with a velvet lawn before the door. The windows were on the French construction, and adorned by virandas, whilst the most costly display of orange trees, and other exotics of the rarest kind, gave the *coup d'œil* to the entrance of '*Myrtle Grove*,' as this retreat of the muses was poetically denominated. The decorations of the house, in the inside, were in a style of elegance that corresponded with its outward appearance ; and every article of furniture which has been invented to indulge the luxury,

or gratify the pride of this age of refinement, were there assembled, to prove at once the taste and opulence of the proprietor.— Could it be possible for pride to be happy, Miss Bridewell must have been so, but it is well known by every common observer, that the gratification of our passions never yet gave the happiness it promised, and pride above all other feelings is the hardest to be satisfied. Miss Bridewell was far from happy, for her haughty temper was insatiable of homage: and notwithstanding she supported *imperial* dignity amongst her immediate dependants, she always felt that uneasiness inseparable from conscious unworthiness, whenever she went into public. She fancied if she were independent she would be more respected, and deplored the necessity there was for her continuing the occupation of governess so long after the aggrandisement of her wishes had rendered every thing short of *haut-ton* degrading to her inflated pride. Her domestic establishment was on a very large scale: she had two men, a coachman, and a porter at the gate, besides a proportionate number of female servants; and this stately parade was become so necessary to her existence, that it obliged her to pursue that occupation which alone could preserve it for her. Her avarice therefore increased with her increasing fortune, and rendered her the ready tool of every person whose power or riches seemed to promise to assist in supporting the consequence she prized so highly. Miss Bridewell, like other ladies who have *establishments* for education, had a limited number of pupils: and as her price was exorbitant, the number was generally on the *deficit* side of the question; and, notwithstanding her constant boast of the *many* applications she was *obliged to refuse*, she felt herself more frequently anxious because of their property than their multitude.

During the Christmas vacation in 1798, Miss Bridewell being from home on a visit at the house of one of her right honourable pupils, the care of her family was left to the inspection of the lady who was styled *sub-governess* in the teaching department. This lady, whose name was Dawson, had long been a great favourite with her employer, because her disposition was of that supple kind, that is exactly suited to an intercourse with such imperious people as Miss Bridewell, whom she took care to flatter

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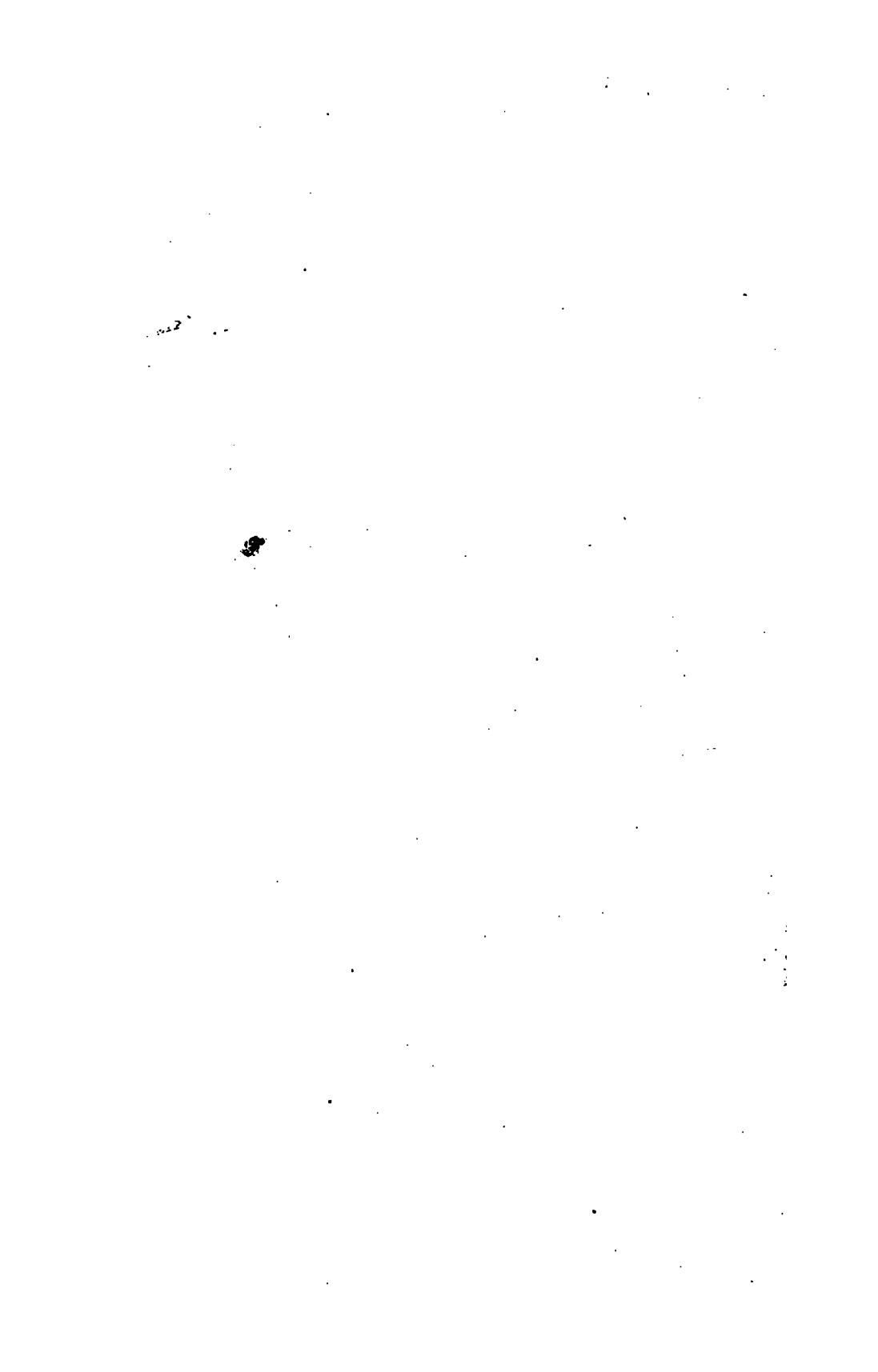


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what can this mean? 'It means, my dear madam, that the two hundred pounds you were just wishing for are there, at your command.' Mrs. Dawson then related the story of Fanny's arrival, produced the letter, and described the child as a perfect cherub in beauty, and a prodigy in sense. Her narrative was worded in a manner so well suited to Miss Bridewell's particularities, that it had the effect upon her mind her narrator intended it should. The seasonable supply of two hundred pounds, at a moment when it was so much wanted, had put her into a good humour, and the artful manner in which the tale had been unfolded completed the favourable impression. Fanny was received at her *levee* the next morning in the most gracious manner: Emily Barlowe was highly commended for having noticed the '*sweet little creature*,' as Miss Bridewell styled her new pupil; and of course it became the order of the day at Myrtle Grove to make '*Fatherless Fanny*' (as she sometimes pathetically called herself,) the favourite of all those who aspired to its lofty mistress's good graces. Every visitor was shown the '*lovely girl*,' and was told, with a significant nod, that time would prove the child to be *somebody*. Never was there a happier being than little Fanny; endowed by nature with a sweet temper, and the most buoyant spirits, enjoying the favour of every creature that approached her, her little heart beat responsive to the blissful feelings of affection and gratitude. Emily Barlowe was, however, the dearest object of her infantile love, and on her gentle bosom the sweet prattler generally composed herself to sleep, when the hour of retirement arrived. To Emily, Fanny was now become the *summum bonum* of happiness, who filled up every moment of leisure with the delightful task of instructing her darling, to whom every accomplishment was imparted her tender age was capable of receiving. Lady Maria Trentham was very fond of Fanny too, and vied with Emily Barlowe in the task of instructing her; and such was the zeal of the teachers, and such the capacity of the scholar, that the little favourite soon became a miracle of cleverness, and was cited as an example to girls twice her age, not only for application but acquirements.

At the end of the first year, Miss Bridewell, who had *depended* upon the annual *two hundred*, promised in Fanny's *recommendatory letter*, felt herself extremely inconvenienced at its not ap-

pearing; but when a second year elapsed, and no notice was taken either of the promise or the child, her patience was entirely exhausted. Poor Fanny was no longer a favourite, but a little troublesome brat, that had been imposed upon her credulity by some designing person, who, depending upon the *benevolence* of her heart, imagined she would keep the child for *nothing*, when once it had got such hold of her affection, as to make it painful to her to part with it; however, they would find themselves mistaken, for she was not a person to be imposed upon in that manner. Emily Barlowe, who was present when Miss Bridewell was venting her spleen upon this irritating subject, thought to herself, 'Those who depend upon the *benevolence* of your heart, *must* find themselves *mistaken*.' 'I will get rid of the little troublesome impostor,' continued the incensed Miss Bridewell; 'I am determined I will do so immediately. Nobody shall *dare* to treat *me* in this manner with impunity. I will advertise the girl in the most popular newspapers, and if *that* expedient does not make her friends come forward, I will send the *chit* to the work-house, where she ought to have been sent at first, if Dawson had not been a *fool*.' 'My dear Miss Bridewell,' said the amiable Emily, as soon as she could get in a word, 'my dear Miss Bridewell, let *me* plead for this poor little innocent; try *one* year more before you have recourse to such severe measures. Perhaps the most fatal consequences may accrue to her unfortunate mother, if you should advertise the particulars of this mysterious story; and may prove the ultimate ruin of the dear child. If nobody comes forward in that time, I will pay you the expenses of this year of *grace* out of my own allowance; and if you are determined to *part* with the lovely orphan, I will write to papa for permission to adopt her, and take her with me to Jamaica when I leave school.' Miss Bridewell knew her own interest too well to refuse such a request as the foregoing. She arrogated considerable merit, however, in the concession, and Fatherless Fanny, as she was now generally denominated by her governess, was permitted to remain at Myrtle Grove, the cherished object of the benevolent Emily's affection, for the space of another year.

That year elapsed like the former two, and yet Fanny was not claimed by any friend, neither was any money remitted for her

support; and the gentle Emily was obliged to pay out of her allowance, the charge made by Miss Bridewell for the last year. This sacrifice of all the good girl's other extra expenses was made with the most perfect good will, in favour of her little darling, yet it was not rewarded with the satisfaction so benevolent an action was entitled to; for, alas! in answer to the pathetical letter she had sent to her father, pleading the cause of the unfortunate orphan, she received one from her mother, couched in terms of high displeasure:—‘I have intercepted the ridiculous letter you addressed to your father,’ said Mrs. Barlowe; ‘and I consider it a lucky circumstance that it fell into my hands, as I know his *silly* good nature would most likely have led him to comply with your romantic request. I desire I may never hear of such a thing again. Adopt a child indeed! I fancy you will find uses enough for your fortune, when you get it into your hands, without encumbering yourself with brats that are nothing to you. Caroline would never have thought of such a thing; I am sure she has too much prudence and good sense to encourage such ridiculous propensities. Remember, girl, *“charity begins at home.”*’

This severe injunction was a cruel blow upon the tender-hearted Emily, who thus lost the power of snatching her dear Fanny from the evils that threatened her. The good girl well knew that if she could obtain her father's ear, her request would be granted; but after this prohibition from her mother, she did not dare to risk another letter on the same subject. Only one year was now wanting for the completion of the Miss Barlowes' education; they were then to return to Jamaica, and Emily consoled herself with the reflection, that at least when she saw her father, she should be able to accomplish her wishes respecting Fanny, if that dear girl should then stand in need of her assistance. Lady Maria Trentham, who was Emily's particular friend, would gladly have assisted her in maintaining Fanny; but, alas, a profusion of fine clothes, and an unnecessary display of trinkets, besides a truly benevolent heart, was all the poor girl possessed. Any thing would have been granted her, indeed, by her indulgent mother, that did not require *ready* money, for of that pleasing article there could not be less in any house than in that of the noble Marquis



MYRTLE GROVE.



A sketch in a very sketchy style, designed to speak to her

of Petersfield ; but poor Lady Maria knew it was of no use to offer any thing short of the *ready* to Miss Bridewell, who was already in Hamlet's case, namely—*'promise crammed.'*

The expedient of advertising the helpless Fanny was therefore adverted to by Miss Bridewell, without farther delay, to the no small concern of that lovely girl's juvenile patronesses, who daily mixed their tears together at the idea of their favourite being removed from their society. The following is the advertisement which appeared in the most popular papers of the day, relative to the forsaken Fanny, and which Miss Bridewell dictated herself.

CHILD FOUND.

Whereas some ill-minded Person or Persons left a little Girl at the house of Miss Bridewell, Myrtle Grove, three years ago, with an intention, no doubt, of defrauding that lady of the maintenance of the said child. This is to give notice, that unless the before-mentioned little Girl be taken away from Myrtle Grove, within one month from the date hereof, she will be sent to the Workhouse. The child answers to the name of Fanny.

CHAPTER II.

A Misunderstanding.

LORD ELLINCOURT was a young nobleman of that thoughtless kind, which is but too often met with in this dissipated age. He was addicted to every species of gaming, not from natural inclination, but an acquired habit of idleness. His lordship possessed abilities calculated to shine in the senate, had their latent powers been drawn forth by that best finisher of a good education—I mean the society of the wise and virtuous. Instead of that, however, this young sprig of nobility had been precipitated into the

vortex of extravagance and folly, by his connexions at college, where so many of his Right Honourable cousins assailed him with the temptations into which they had long been initiated themselves, that between precept and example, his mind became perverted, and he forsook the paths of learning for those of dissipation; and soon preferred *killing* time, by a thousand extravagant follies, to the sober enjoyment of *spending* it in rational amusements, or valuable acquirements. At his *debut* in the great world Lord Ellincourt kept a stud of race-horses for the sake of *employment*; two packs of hounds for the same reason; and for the same good motive, when the pleasures of London confined him to the metropolis for the *season*, (winter is no lenger in fashion,) he drove, with the fury of a *Jeju*, a *tandem*, *dog-cart*, a *mail*, and an *inexplicable*, to the astonishment of the natives, and the imminent danger of the sober foot passengers who came in his way, whilst taking his dashing round through Bond-street, Pall Mall, St. James's-street, and Piccadilly. Lord Ellincourt, like most men of fashion, had many *favourites* amongst the fair sex, but few upon whose fidelity he could place much reliance. One exception, however, he had long been in possession of, who, although a female, had never for an instant broken her faith. Some of his favourites received his lordship according to the state of his finances, and smiled or frowned in proportion to the golden shower that fell into their laps from his bounty; but his little *Fan* was invariable in the display of her affection, and lavished her caresses upon her beloved lord without considering whether he had had a run of good or ill luck. His lordship was not ungrateful, and his regard for Fan was quite equal to the affection she felt for him, nor did he ever think himself happy when she was not by his side. Whithersoever he went, his faithful friend went with him, and even partook of his bed-room; but lest I should be supposed to be a retailer of scandalous anecdotes, I must beg leave, in this place, to inform my readers that poor Fan was a *four-footed lady*, and therefore the intimacy that subsisted between her and Lord Ellincourt could reflect no disgrace on either party. A misfortune, however, happened, that disturbed the happiness of this loving pair. Poor Fan was stolen away, and every effort to find her proved ineffectual, although advertisements, offering large rewards, were inserted in all the

papers. The loss of his dear little favourite had been the theme of Lord Ellincourt's conversation for many weeks, and his gay companions began to grow weary of the subject. 'What nonsense it is,' said Colonel Ross to Sir Henry Ambersley, 'to be obliged to listen to Ellincourt's lamentations for the loss of his little mongrel, every time one meets him.'

'Let's hoax him,' replied Sir Henry, 'and cure him of such nonsensical prosing.' 'In what manner?' asked his friend. 'I'll show you,' replied Sir Henry, taking a newspaper that lay before them on the table, and pointing out Miss Bridewell's advertisement. 'But what will that do?' again asked Colonel Ross; 'what hoax can you make of that stupid paragraph?' 'You shall see,' answered Sir Henry: 'here comes Ellincourt, and I will put my scheme into execution immediately.' Lord Ellincourt entered the coffee room at the same instant, and coming up to the two friends, he asked, with his usual *nonchalance*, 'what news?' 'The best in the world,' replied Sir Henry; 'your little *Fan* is found.' 'The deuce she is: but tell me, my dear fellow, the *wheres*, and the *hows*, and *all that*.' 'I'll read you the advertisement,' answered Sir Henry, taking the paper in his hand and reading Miss Bridewell's advertisement aloud, only substituting the word dog in the place of child and girl, whenever they occurred, suppressing the date, and concluding line, respecting the workhouse, and adding a *threat* to hang the poor animal, if not reclaimed within a month. 'What a barbarian!' exclaimed Lord Ellincourt, 'to talk of hanging poor little *Fan*. If she was to do it, I would burn the old faggot. I will drive down there directly. I know Myrtle Grove immensely well; I have been there to see the Trenthams, with my mother. A queer old figure that said governess is; I remember her well. I did not like her *phiz*. May I be *bamboozled* the next Newmarket Meeting, if I don't scalp the old savage with my own hands, should I find she has used *Fan* ill, mind that.' Sir Henry and Colonel Ross laughed. 'Take care you don't get into the *stocks*, my boy,' said he: 'remember you will be on *classic* ground, and don't sin against the muses.' 'Confusion seize the muses, and the *classic* ground too,' rejoined my lord; 'little *Fan* is worth all Parnassus put together.—Adieu—I am off. I will bring little *Fan* back, or the old Gorgon's head, I am determined upon that.'

'Had not your lordship better read the advertisement yourself, before you set out?' said Colonel Ross, offering the paper. 'Oh! no, no,' replied Lord Ellincourt, 'there *can* be no mistake; the description answers exactly: and the poor little animal being shut up in that bore of a place is the reason I have not been able to find her before.' As he spoke, his impatient lordship hastened out of the room, and left his two friends laughing at the credulity with which he had taken the hoax. 'I little imagined,' said Colonel Ross, 'that he would have swallowed the bait so easily.' 'You are a pretty fellow too, an't you?' replied Sir Henry. 'I thought you would have spoiled the joke. Quiz me if I would not give a *cool* hundred to be present when he and the old governess get at it, tooth and nail.' 'What, do you think they will fight?' 'I am sure of it,' answered Sir Henry: 'Ellincourt will insist upon having his dog, the old girl will say she has not got it, and then there will be a quarrel. She is a very dragon, my sister tells me, and Ellincourt is *Cayenne* itself: so if there be not a *row*, I shall be surprised.' This was by much too good a joke to be confined to two people; after a hearty laugh, therefore, the fashionable pair strolled out on purpose 'to *set it a-going*,' and to prepare a merry meeting for their friend Ellincourt, at his return from Myrtle Grove.

In the mean time Lord Ellincourt proceeded to the livery stables, where his horses stood, and ordering his grooms to prepare his tandem immediately, and to follow him to Hyde Park, he walked thither, anticipating the joy he should experience, when little Fan was restored to him. The drive to Myrtle Grove appeared of an immoderate length, so impatient was his lordship to reach the place that contained his long-lost favourite. At length the white gate, leading to the sweep before the mansion, struck his eye, and giving a renovating crack of his whip to increase the speed of his barbs, the dashing equipage presently stopped before it. The porter answering in the affirmative to the question whether Miss Bridewell was at home, Lord Ellincourt alighted, and was ushered into the elegant *boudoir* of the *modish* governess. His lordship's patience experienced a severe trial, whilst waiting the arrival of the antiquated virgin; for having sent in his name, the lady was too anxious to appear in *style* to think of coming before his lord-

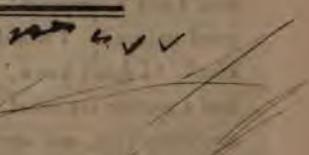
ship until she had consulted her mirror, to ascertain the exact state of her dress. In performing this *necessary* sacrifice to the graces, Miss Bridewell perceived that her cap did not become her, and she changed it for another; then her *gown* did not please her, and she ordered her maid to bring her last new dress, which was substituted for the one she had on: when completely equipped, she descended to her expecting visitor, who, having examined every picture, and turned over every newspaper that lay upon the table, was standing whistling in one of the windows when Miss Bridewell entered the room. She began a long apology, which, however, Lord Ellincourt interrupted in the middle, by saying, 'Dear madam, excuse my impatience; your advertisement informs me that you have got my little Fan, and I am in a great hurry to see the dear creature.' 'And does little Fanny belong to your lordship?' exclaimed Miss Bridewell, in a tone of surprise, whilst a smile of complaisance expressed the pleasure she felt at the intelligence. 'How happy I feel that the dear little creature fell into my hands! I am sure your lordship will be satisfied with the care I have taken of her.' 'You are very good, ma'am,' answered his lordship, with an impatient inclination of the head; 'I have no doubt of your kindness to the little thing, but I really wish to see her; she is a great favourite of mine, and so was her mother.' 'Your lordship was acquainted with Fanny's mother, then,' said Miss Bridewell, drawing up her mouth in a formal manner. 'Oh, yes,' answered his lordship, laughing,—'her mother and I were old acquaintances.' Miss Bridewell's formality increased at this speech of his lordship's, but her features were rather relaxed at the conclusion of it; for he added, 'and so, indeed, was her father. I was very fond of him too.' 'And pray, my lord,' asked the prim lady, 'what is become of poor Fanny's father? I understood he was dead.' 'I wonder by what means you ever heard any thing about him,' replied Lord Ellincourt: 'however, if it will be any satisfaction to you to know it, I must inform you he was *hanged*, about two years ago.' 'Hanged! Did your lordship say *hanged*?' exclaimed Miss Bridewell, with horror and astonishment painted on her features. 'Yes, my good ma'am,' answered his lordship, with a smile, 'the poor fellow was really *hanged* for sheep-stealing. I did what I could to save him, but my interest failed; he was

caught in the fact, and the farmer would not hear of *pardon*. But what's the matter, Miss Bridewell? you look frightened.' 'And enough to make me so, I think, my lord,' answered she, 'to reflect that I have been harbouring the daughter of a *sheep-stealer* in my house all this time.' 'Oh! is that all l' answered Lord Ellincourt, laughing: 'don't let that frighten you; my life upon it little Fan will never meddle with your *lambs*. I don't intend to allow her to stay any longer among them.' 'I assure your lordship,' said Miss Bridewell, with a haughty toss of her head, 'the contamination has already been too great. But pray, my lord, what is become of the mother of this unfortunate female? is she still alive?' 'No, she is *dead* too,' answered his lordship: 'I *kept* her as long as she lived; and so I mean to do by Fan, if you will but have the goodness to put an end to this long catechism, and let me have the dear little creature.' 'I have no intention of detaining her, I assure your lordship; but I beg leave to observe, that I shall expect to be reimbursed for the expenses I have been at in her maintenance and education.' 'The maintenance of such a little animal,' replied his lordship, 'cannot be much to be sure; but as to her education, I am certainly no judge of what that may be, for I cannot imagine what the deuce you can have taught her; she knew how to *fetch* and *carry* before I lost her.' 'Your lordship talks in a very odd strain,' answered Miss Bridewell, 'but I can produce the masters' bills, who have been employed to teach her *music*, *dancing*, and *drawing*.' Lord Ellincourt burst into an immoderate fit of laughter. 'Excuse me, Miss Bridewell, but really I cannot help it. You *educating* ladies are for instructing every thing that comes near you, or you never would have thought of teaching my poor *Fan* such a long list of accomplishments; however, to make all straight, I will agree thus far to your demand, if you will prove to me that your scholar has learned *any thing* of what you pretend to have taught her. I will pay for it whatever you think proper to charge; for, upon my soul, I think I shall make my fortune by showing the little creature about the streets. *Dancing* she *may* have acquired, but as to any thing else, excuse me if I don't believe a word of it.' 'Your lordship is at liberty to think what you please,' answered Miss Bridewell, haughtily, 'but I shall insist on being paid, before I live up the child. I

will fetch her to convince your lordship that she has *capacity*, and that she has received *instruction*.' So saying, Miss Bridewell flounced out of the room, and left Lord Ellincourt mute with astonishment.—'That old maid,' at length said he, 'is so used to have children under her care, that when she gets a *dog* into her clutches, she fancies she must educate that; and talks about it till she believes a spaniel is a child.' Miss Bridewell was absent only a few minutes, and she returned leading Fanny by the hand, whose terrified countenance and streaming eyes plainly evinced the severity with which her governess had just been treating her. Fanny was now turned of eight years old, a tall, elegantly-formed child, whose dazzling complexion and beautiful features were calculated to strike every beholder with admiration. Lord Ellincourt gazed at her with surprise mingled with delight. 'What a sweet creature!' exclaimed his lordship: 'but why is she weeping?' 'There, my lord, is little Fanny,' said Miss Bridewell, not noticing his question; 'and if your lordship was really as fond of her worthless parents as you pretend to have been, you will not think much at paying the debts their offspring has contracted.' 'Upon my honour, madam,' replied Lord Ellincourt, 'I am wholly at a loss to guess what you are aiming at; I never had the honour of seeing the parents of that sweet girl, at least to the best of my knowledge.' 'Why, good heavens!' exclaimed Miss Bridewell, 'did not your lordship say, not a quarter of an hour ago, that her father was *hanged* for *sheep-stealing*, and that her mother was a *naughty kept-woman*?' 'Who, I?' rejoined Lord Ellincourt, starting. 'I never even *imagined* such a thing.' 'I am astonished at your lordship; indeed, I am,' said Miss Bridewell, her eyes flashing resentment: 'did not your lordship say you were come to fetch Fanny away, and that you intended keeping her as long as she lived, as you had done her mother? And all that we hesitated about was respecting the payment of my demand for her education.' 'Here has been a great mistake,' replied Lord Ellincourt, 'and I feel very much ashamed of having occasioned you so much trouble. I came here, madam, at the instigation of a friend of mine, who told me you had found a little *dog*, belonging to me, which I lost some time ago. The little animal's name was *Fanny*, and hence originated the mistake.'

My friend, Sir Henry Ambersley, read an advertisement to me this morning stating that the creature was found, and might be heard of *here*. I am persuaded he did it for a hoax, of which he is too fond, a circumstance I ought to have recollect'd when he was playing off this morning; but the joy of finding Fanny was predominant, and swallowed up every other consideration.' 'It is, indeed, a strange circumstance,' replied Miss Bridewell, 'and has been productive of much trouble to me.' 'I am very sorry, very sorry, upon my soul,' answered Lord Ellincourt; 'and what concerns me more than any thing else is, that I fear I have occasioned sorrow to this beautiful little angel,' taking Fanny's hand, who had dried up her tears when she heard his lordship declare that she was not the daughter of a *sheep-stealer*. Miss Bridewell reached a newspaper which contained her advertisement, and begged Lord Ellincourt to read it. As soon as he had complied with her request, he said, 'And is it possible you intend to send this child to the workhouse?' 'Yes, my lord, unless she be reclaimed by the time I have specified.' 'By heavens you shall not!' said his lordship. 'I will pay for her myself, if no one comes forward to claim her. I will keep a horse or two less at Newmarket, to enable me to do it. Do you agree to that, Miss Bridewell?' Miss Bridewell smiled, and was vastly pleased with such an arrangement. 'Your lordship understands there are *arrears*!' 'Undoubtedly; and as I have just had a run of good luck, let us strike a balance now; let us have your bill.' Miss Bridewell complied with his request; and presenting her exorbitant demand, which she had got ready drawn out, in case of any application from the child's friends, Lord Ellincourt only looked at the sum total, and immediately drew upon his banker for the amount. 'There,' said he, 'remember now Fanny is *my* child henceforward; and mind you use the little angel kindly, or blame me if I don't blow your house up with gunpowder. I may come to see her sometimes, mayn't I?' added his lordship. 'Certainly, my lord,' answered Miss Bridewell, courtesying low; 'we shall always esteem your lordship's visits an honour. And Fanny I am sure ought to love Lord Ellincourt.' 'And so I do most dearly, dearly,' answered the sweet girl, holding up her lovely face to kiss her benefactor. 'I shall pray

for Lord Ellincourt every night and morning, and so will Emily Barlowe and Lady Maria Trentham, for they have been so unhappy about me." Lord Ellincourt embraced his adopted child, and said that he never felt so happy in his life; "No, by heavens," added he, "not even when my Miss Tiffany beat Sir Jeffery Dollman's Ganderface, and the bets won two thousand guineas." "Apropos," said his lordship, turning back as he was leaving the room, after having embraced Fanny half a dozen times for farewell, "I forgot, I ought to see the Lady Trenthams; they are my cousins." Miss Bridewell entreated his lordship to defer that intention until his next visit, and after some hesitation he complied, and hastening to his carriage, dashed off in an instant. Fanny, who accompanied her governess to the door, to witness his departure, followed the carriage with her eyes full of tears, "What a dear sweet gentleman that is!" said the innocent girl: "Oh how I love him." "He is a very generous man indeed," said Miss Bridewell. And well she might say so, for he paid her enormous charge for the whole time Fanny had been with her. The two hundred pounds that came with her, and Miss Barlowe's generous contribution, were therefore a clear profit; and Fatherless Fanny thus became one of the most advantageous scholars she had ever had.



CHAPTER III.



Mutual Explanation.

WHEN Fanny returned to the apartment where the other young ladies were, she entered it with a lively bound, and running up to Miss Emily Barlowe, clasped her arms about her neck; the good-natured Emily's tears flowed so fast, that she could not speak; but Miss Barlowe, the haughty Caroline, came and disengaged Fanny from her sister's embrace, saying, in an ill-natured tone of voice, "This disgraceful intimacy has endured long enough; I

insist now upon its termination.' Fanny looked aghast, and turning her eyes upon the other ladies, observed contempt and abhorrence painted on every countenance, excepting those of Emily and the compassionate Lady Maria Trentham, who, rising from her seat, took the terrified girl by the hand, and said, 'Don't be frightened, Fanny, I will always be your friend.' 'Indeed! but I say nay to that,' interrupted Lady Isabella: 'a very pretty story, truly, for the Marquis of Petersfield's daughter to be the companion of a *sheep-stealer's child*.' Here all the girls burst into a fit of laughter, and poor Fanny was so overcome, that covering her face with her hands, she sobbed aloud. Emily Barlowe could not support the sight of her favourite's sorrow, but taking her in her arms, she pressed her to her bosom. 'Nothing short of a parent's commands shall induce me to forsake this dear child,' said she, 'let her be the daughter of what she will.' Soothed by this kindness, poor Fanny recovered her speech—'I am not a sheep-stealer's daughter; indeed, Miss Emily, it was all a mistake, for Lord Ellincourt said so.' 'Lord Ellincourt!' exclaimed Lady Maria Trentham, 'was it Lord Ellincourt who has just been here? He is my cousin!' 'I know it,' replied Fanny; 'and his lordship asked Miss Bridewell to let him see you and Lady Isabella; but she begged him to wait until he called next time.' 'Is he coming again soon?' asked Lady Maria. 'Yes,' replied Fanny, 'very soon. Oh how I love Lord Ellincourt.' 'And so do I,' said Lady Maria, 'he is so good-natured.' Twonder why Miss Bridewell would not let us see him.' 'I don't know,' answered Fanny. Miss Bridewell generally had a motive for what she did, that concerned herself nearer than any body else, and such was the case in the present instance; for her only reason for refusing Lord Ellincourt's request was, that she wished to conceal, from a person who had evinced such natural benevolence as his lordship had done, the cruelty of her own heart, which had led her to treat poor Fanny with such unmerited severity, upon the strength of a mere surmise. When Miss Bridewell had quitted the room to fetch Fanny to Lord Ellincourt, her mind was impressed with the idea of the imputed worthlessness of the child's parents, and proud of an opportunity of revenging the anxiety she had suffered on her account, she immediately spread the report of poor Fanny being the daughter of a sheep-stealer, by

exclaiming, when she entered *la salle des sciences*, 'Where is the worthless girl I have been wasting so much care upon?' Then seizing Fauny's hand with an ill-natured jerk, she added, 'A pretty creature you are, to be sure, Miss, to be brought into the society of young ladies of rank, a sheep-stealer's daughter!!!' The young ladies looked astonished: 'Yes, indeed, ladies,' said Miss Bridewell, 'this girl is the offspring of a kept mistress, and a man that was hanged for *sheep-stealing*.' The consequence of such a speech to a group of young girls, proud of their births, and tenacious of their consequence, may readily be imagined; every one was unanimous in execrating the innocent object of their hatred, with the exception of Lady Maria Trentham and Emily Barlowe, who could only weep over a misfortune they could not remedy. The joy these benevolent girls experienced, when they heard Fanny say the whole was a mistake, may be readily imagined; and when it was confirmed by Miss Bridewell herself, who related the story of the dog, as an elucidation of the mistake, a hearty laugh removed every vestige of sorrow and displeasure; and the sweet Fanny was restored to the same portion of favour she before enjoyed with every one of her school-mates.

When Mrs. Dawson was informed that the hurricane had subsided, she made her appearance in the circle she had quitted at the first intimation of Miss Bridewell's displeasure; for as she had been the ostensible person in receiving Fanny, she well knew, if the disagreeable report proved true, she should be a material sufferer, both from her stately superior and the young ladies. Lord Ellincourt's generosity, however, had put Miss Bridewell into such a perfect good humour, that Fanny was once more her '*little poppet*'; and Mrs. Dawson, from a '*great fool*,' was become her '*dear Dawson*,' and received the pleasing intelligence of the debt contracted by Fanny having been so nobly discharged, as well as the promise made by Lord Ellincourt of supporting the little orphan in future. 'The turn-off about the *dog*, my dear Dawson,' said Miss Bridewell, 'was extremely well done; but I assure you it did not impose upon me, for I firmly believe it at this moment, that Fanny is Lord Ellincourt's daughter. But as much good may be drawn from keeping the girl, you may be sure I shall not breathe my suspicions; and I desire you to be equally circumspect.'

'Oh, you know, my dear ma'am, that you can rely upon my prudence. I am as secret as the grave. But do you really think Fanny can be Lord Ellincourt's daughter? I understand his lordship is only just two and-twenty, and Fanny, you know, is turned of eight.' Miss Bridewell paused—then answered, in an impatient tone, 'I don't care how old either of them are, I have adopted my opinion, and I am not apt to relinquish my opinions when once formed.' Mrs. Dawson knew this as well as Miss Bridewell; she therefore acquiesced without further disputation, and Miss Bridewell proceeded to give directions respecting Fanny's future acquirements. Notwithstanding her boast to Lord Ellincourt, no masters had attended the poor girl since the defalcation of the payment. Miss Emily Barlowe had supplied their place to the utmost of her abilities, that her favourite might not entirely lose the accomplishments in which she was making such rapid progress. 'That girl must be attended to *now*,' said Miss Bridewell, 'for I dare say she will go somewhere in the holidays, where her advancement will be ascertained.' 'I will observe what you say, my dear ma'am,' said the supple Mrs. Dawson; 'you know the neglect she has experienced was at your own suggestion.' 'Yes, yes,' replied Miss Bridewell, 'I am aware of that; but no doubt you remember the old French adage—*'Point d'argent, point de suisse'*: and so it ought to be at Myrtle Grove.' 'Undoubtedly,' rejoined Mrs. Dawson, 'we must not throw our attention upon *beggars*.'

Whilst matters were settling according to this *prudent* plan at Myrtle Grove, Lord Ellincourt pursued his way to London, singing to himself with a *gaieté de cœur* of which, till that moment, he had been insensible. This may appear a paradoxical assertion, after what has been said respecting the thoughtless life his lordship had hitherto led; but to any of my readers who may have trod the flowery paths of dissipated pleasure, it will not be deemed impossible that a disciple of *Circe* should be a stranger to genuine *heartfelt* satisfaction—That sweet sensation of the soul is the result of conscious virtue; and the first time Lord Ellincourt experienced its happy influence was when he first reflected on a benevolent action. It was not that his lordship was destitute of humanity, or insensible to feeling, but from a natural thoughtlessness of disposition, and an habitual propensity to dissipation, that

he had never before adopted the plan of extending the hand of charity to the sons and daughters of misfortune, as an expedient against the *ennui* of which he was always complaining. Chance had now thrown an opportunity in his way of trying a new kind of *délassement*; and the result of the experiment was, a determination on the part of his lordship to pursue the path that had been struck out for him. The motion of the light vehicle he was driving was not more rapid than the progress of the ideas that succeeded each other in Lord Ellincourt's mind, as he returned towards the metropolis. Fanny, the lovely artless Fanny, was the subject of all these cogitations; and the fascination that had seized his mind increased with every recollection. Her interesting countenance, at the moment he first beheld her, still seemed to rise before him; her blooming cheeks suffused with pearly drops; her eyes of 'softest blue,' turned with a suppliant look towards him, that might have softened the most obdurate heart. 'Sweet creature!' said his lordship, as he drove along; 'I never spent money with such delight as that I paid for her to-day. She shall be my child! by heavens, she shall; and I will maintain her like a little princess!' This resolution filled Lord Ellincourt's heart with pleasure, and when he drove through the turnpike at Hyde Park Corner, he was so absorbed in the agreeable reverie he had indulged in, that he did not perceive Colonel Ross and Sir Henry Ambersley, who were strolling arm in arm along the *pavé*, expressly for the purpose of way-laying his lordship on his return. 'Ellincourt,' exclaimed Sir Henry, exalting his voice into the tones of Stentor, 'where's little Fan?' Lord Ellincourt drew up to the side of the pavement, and extended his hand to Sir Henry. 'A thousand thanks, my dear fellow,' said he, 'for procuring me the greatest pleasure I ever experienced in my life. The little Fan you sent me in search of, instead of a *dog*, is an *angel*!' 'What, have you been peeping at *Winifred* Bridewell's pretty heiresses, *eh*, Ellincourt?' said Sir Henry. Lord Ellincourt gave the reins to his groom, and descending from his carriage, he joined his friends. 'Old Bridewell is a downright divinity, and Myrtle Grove superior to *Ida* itself,' said his lordship, putting an arm through that of the friend on each side of him. 'He's *caught*, by all that's striking,' said Col. Ross; 'old Bridewell knows what she's about, I warrant her; she has

been *showing off some title-hunting Miss*, and the trap has taken a lord. A true bill, is it not, Ellincourt? 'That my heart is touched, I allow,' replied his lordship; 'and by a pretty girl too; but it is an artless amour, I assure you, on both sides, and owing entirely to your hoax about the dog, Ambersley. It is an attachment that will last for life, however, I am persuaded; and when I show the object of my affection, if you do not say she is the most fascinating creature you ever saw, I will never cite you for men of taste again as long as I live.' 'But *when* shall we see her?' asked Sir Henry, 'for you have set me longing: is the *show* open to every body?' 'Oh, no,' said Col. Ross, 'I suppose Ellincourt has ordered her to be shut up until he puts his coronet on her brow. Is it not so?' 'Time will show,' answered his lordship: 'but this I will promise you, next time I go to Myrtle Grove, I will take *one* of you; for I suppose they will not grant admission to *three* such sad dogs; and then you will be better able to form your judgment of my *charmer*.' 'Hoax for hoax, my word for it,' said Colonel Ross: 'Ellincourt is only playing at *reprisals*. He has been put into the *stocks* at Myrtle Grove for his ill-behaviour, and he wants to get us into the same *serape*.' 'You may do as you like about going,' rejoined his lordship, 'but I give you my word I am in earnest; I never was more serious in my life. And to prove it, I intend persuading my mother to accompany me in my next visit. I shall drive her in my mail, and you can sit with me upon the *dickey*.' 'I will go with you,' said Col. Ross, 'if you are not afraid of a *militaire*. If I should rival you, it would not be so well.' 'True,' rejoined Lord Ellincourt, 'but I am fearless on that subject. *My Fanny* will love me best, see who she will.' 'I do not feel so sure of that,' said Sir Henry Ambersley: 'and as I have no inclination to measure swords with you, I will abstain from going.' 'Comme il vous plaira,' answered Lord Ellincourt, and the subject was immediately changed.

The whim of adopting Fanny did not turn out like most of Lord Ellincourt's former whims; it survived the lapse of several days, and seemed to acquire strength from reflection. The Dowager Lady Ellincourt, his lordship's mother, was one of those indulgent parents that feel every other sentiment absorbed in their maternal tenderness. Her ladyship had been left a young

widow, and although several very advantageous offers had been made her, she had remained in the solitary state of widowhood out of pure affection to her children.

Lady Ellincourt had only two children living; the son, of whom we have been speaking, and one daughter, who was some years older than her brother. Lady Caroline Mason had been married, at the early age of seventeen, to the Earl of Castlebrazil, an Irish nobleman, and resided chiefly in that country. Lord Ellincourt was therefore his mother's only solace; and there was no request that he could make her, with which she did not feel eager to comply. Her ladyship was at her villa, at Richmond, when Lord Ellincourt paid his visit to Myrtle Grove; she knew nothing therefore of her son's new attachment until her return to London, about a week afterwards, when Lord Ellincourt called at her ladyship's house in Hill-street, and broke the ice in the following manner:—

'I have something to ask you, my dear mother, that I hardly know how to begin about, for fear you should disapprove of it.' 'What is it, Edmund?' said Lady Ellincourt, with a smile that might have encouraged even a more timid petitioner. 'You know I am not *very inaccessible*.'

'I know it well,' replied his lordship, 'and therefore I don't like to intrude upon your goodness; but my heart is set upon your compliance.' 'Is it money, Edmund?' 'No, upon my honour; but I will not give you the trouble of guessing, my dear mother. I have taken a fancy to a sweet girl, and I want your countenance for her.' 'Edmund,' said Lady Ellincourt, looking very grave, 'I hope you are not forming an attachment I am likely to disapprove of. Marriages, against the consent of parents, are seldom productive of happiness; and I have the most decided objection to them from a knowledge of their fatal tendency. My own family will furnish you with an instance of the most melancholy kind, that could not fail of impressing your mind with a salutary fear of falling into the same error, were I to take the trouble of relating the sad tale; but I know you have a great dislike to long stories, so I shall not trouble you with it, unless you render it necessary by your imprudence.' 'You give excellent advice, my dear mother,' replied Lord Ellincourt; 'but my

attachment is not of the kind you suppose it to be. The girl I have taken a fancy to is quite a child; she is destitute of friends; and I am determined to defray the expenses of her education. The favour I want you to grant me, is your countenance for the sweet little creature, which, when you have seen, you will admire as much as I do.' Lord Ellincourt then related the trick Sir Henry Ambersley had played him, about the advertisement, and the visit in consequence of it to Miss Bridewell's Temple of Instruction. Lady Ellincourt laughed: 'Are you sure, Edmund,' said she, 'that this is the *truth*, and *nothing but the truth*?' 'Upon honour,' replied his lordship, 'when you have seen her you will not doubt it: let me drive you there to-day, my dear mother.' 'Not to-day,' replied her ladyship, 'but I will accompany you to-morrow.'

The next day Lady Ellincourt kept her appointment; and her son, accompanied by Colonel Ross, drove her down to Myrtle Grove. Lady Ellincourt had been in the habit of visiting the ladies Trentham, and was therefore personally known to Miss Bridewell, who, being a devout worshipper of high rank, was delighted when her noble visitor was announced. Lady Isabella and Lady Maria were called to see their aunt; and at their entrance Lord Ellincourt demanded his dear little Fanny. Miss Bridewell, with a significant nod, said, 'I waited for your lordship's command:' and ringing the bell, ordered the servant to fetch Miss Fanny. The sweet child soon obeyed the summons, and regardless of the presence of Lady Ellincourt and Colonel Ross, ran with open arms to embrace her benefactor, whose delight at this testimony of her gratitude and affection made him ready to devour her with kisses. As soon as the loving pair could separate from each other, Lady Ellincourt took Fanny by the hand, and examining her countenance, exclaimed, 'What a sweet creature! What is her name, Edmund?' 'Fatherless Fanny!' replied Lord Ellincourt, 'she has no other.' 'I am not to be called *Fatherless Fanny* any more,' said the child, 'for Lord Ellincourt will be my papa.' Colonel Ross smiled and looked significant, and Lady Ellincourt pressed the sweet girl to her bosom. A suspicion she could not repress made her ladyship incline towards the Colonel's and Miss Bridewell's opinion, although a

moderate calculation of their respective ages would have proved beyond a doubt the fallacy of such an idea, as that Fanny could be Lord Ellincourt's daughter. The playful innocence of the engaging Fanny won completely upon the heart of Lady Ellincourt, who became as warm an advocate for the scheme of adoption as her son, and added her charges to his, in desiring Miss Bridewell to attend to the education of the lovely orphan, who rose proportionably in the good graces of her governess, as she appeared to be esteemed by the great people that lady so constantly bowed to. Lady Maria Trentham, who rejoiced in Fanny's good fortune, received her cousin with more than usual cordiality; and Lord Ellincourt, who had been informed by Fanny of her ladyship's kindness to his favourite, thought he had never seen the amiable Maria look so bewitching.

When Lady Ellincourt found, by her watch, that she had stayed to the utmost limits of her time, she gave the signal for departure; and Lord Ellincourt, putting a little parcel into Fanny's hand, which he told her contained a keep-sake, kissed her for farewell, and the whole party separated.

During the drive home, Colonel Ross repeated his conjectures, respecting Fanny's affinity to her benefactor, adding, with a laugh, that he could not have supposed his lordship capable of so much art as he had that day displayed. 'Why you have done the old lady completely,' said he. 'If you mean that I have imposed upon my mother,' said Lord Ellincourt, 'you are mistaken; for I am sure I did not know there was such a being in existence as my little Fanny, until Ambersley sent me on a fool's errand in search of her namesake.' 'If that be really the case,' said Colonel Ross, 'I can guess what are your views with this girl. She is a pretty creature, and will make an agreeable variation in your *amours passagées* by and by.' 'I may have been dissipated and unthinking,' replied Lord Ellincourt, reddening with resentment at the vile suggestion, 'but I hope I am incapable of *deliberate villainy*, such as you insinuate. The precaution I have taken of getting my mother's sanction to my whim ought to teach you better.'

'You astonish me!' interrupted Colonel Ross: 'is it possible that you have no other view but benevolence in this munificent

action? 'None, upon my honour; excepting, indeed, the pleasure of contributing to the happiness of a being I love, in a manner wholly unaccountable, even to myself,' said Lord Ellincourt.

'Then I must compliment your lordship's *philanthropy*,' rejoined the colonel, sarcastically; 'and I hope you will let me participate in the happiness resulting from such heroism, by permitting me sometimes to visit your beautiful *protege* in your company.'

'No, by heavens!' replied Lord Ellincourt: 'the man who could suspect another of such baseness as the deliberate perversion of innocence, is unfit to be trusted where he could prove himself capable of the same turpitude, to the detriment of a defenceless female.' 'Moralizing too,' said Colonel Ross, 'by all that's pretty! Upon my honour, I rejoice in your lordship's conversion, and cannot enough admire the superlatively charming cause of such a wonderful reformation.'

Here the conversation ended, and the remainder of the drive passed in silence on both sides. Lord Ellincourt was piqued, and Colonel Ross was digesting a scheme which had presented itself to his fancy, whilst conversing on the subject of the gentle Fanny: the accomplishment of which promised to gratify two of his predominant passions; namely, sensuality and revenge. Lord Ellincourt had offended his pride by censuring his sentiments, and he wished for an opportunity of being even with him. To deprive his lordship, at some future period, of the object of his generous affection, offered a fair prospect to the diabolical colonel of revenging the supposed injury, and at the same time obtaining a beautiful creature to administer to his unlawful pleasures, and finally become the victim of them.

It was certainly a long while to look forward to, but Colonel Ross was one of those epicures in sensuality, who could deliberately plan, and unrelentingly execute, the most atrocious acts of cruelty, if they promised the slightest gratification to his depraved appetite. His wickedness was systematic, and he had as much pleasure in planning as in executing the designs he conceived.

But we will leave him to his cogitations, and proceed with our narrative. The happy Fanny, as soon as her new friends had

departed, opened the parcel Lord Ellincourt left with her, and found, to her great delight, an elegant gold chain for her neck, with a small watch suspended, and a pair of bracelets to correspond. It will be easily conceived how such a present must win upon the heart of a girl like Fanny. She jumped about in raptures, and displayed her '*Papa's*' present, as she styled Lord Ellincourt, to every creature that came near her; and the novelty of possessing such a treasure kept her awake a good part of the night.

However, she soon became accustomed to the possession of trinkets; for Lord Ellincourt never was so happy as when bestowing marks of his generosity upon his favourite. Anxious to purchase good treatment for her, his lordship took care to remember Miss Bridewell with a munificence that completely won that lady's heart. The improvement of *Fatherless Fanny* seemed now of more real consequence than that of any lady in the house, and Mrs. Dawson and the subordinate teachers were continually reminded of Miss Bridewell's anxiety on the subject. It has already been said, that Fanny possessed great natural abilities; her rapid progress may therefore be supposed, under such advantageous circumstances; and she soon became a brilliant proof of the skill so justly ascribed to the preceptress of Myrtle Grove *establishment*, in bestowing polite accomplishments upon the pupils under her care. But barren is that mind, whose improvement has been confined to the study of mere ornamental acquirements. The musician, the dancer, or the paintress, however skilful in the various branches, will make but a poor wife, if she be deficient in the more solid and valuable qualities of good sense, good temper, and above all, religion and virtue.

The softest melody cannot soothe the ear of pain, nor can the anxious eye of sorrow dwell with delight upon the graceful attitude, or highly finished picture. The knowledge of languages, though carried to the highest pitch of perfection, can suggest no comfort for affliction, nor strengthen the suffering mind to bear the reverse of fortune with fortitude and resignation. Such knowledge, therefore, may be pronounced in the words of Solomon—'Vanity of vanities,' unless she who possesses it has first sought religion in the page of truth, and having found the divine pre-

cept, made that the basis on which the superstructure of the refinement was reared. The accomplishments and graces which adorn virtue, may be entitled to admiration. The skill of the lapidary may call forth the brilliancy of the diamond, but cannot give the same lustre to the pebble.

All the pains bestowed upon Fanny's education by Miss Bridewell and her assistants would have availed little, had not the good precepts instilled into her heart by the amiable Emily Barlowe given solidity to her principles. Piety is a natural feeling of the youthful heart, and only requires some skilful hand to call forth its latent energies, and give them their proper bias. Emily Barlowe had been instructed by her father in the principles of religion; and her youthful heart glowed with the fervour of genuine piety. With what rapture did the amiable instructress awaken, in the docile mind of her beloved Fanny, the first conceptions of the Deity, and teach her guileless lips to pronounce the first words of praise and gratitude. Then judiciously turning the mind of her pupil from the adoration of the *Creator* to the contemplation of the *creature*. Pity for the various ills inseparable from human nature soon gave birth to charity, and the mercy she asked of God for herself, she felt ready to bestow upon her fellow mortals; not only in gifts of benevolence, but in acts of forbearance and good-will. Thus Fanny, in imitation of the example Emily set before her eyes, became good-natured, patient, and forgiving from principle, and benevolent from the irresistible feelings of her heart.—

‘Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined!—

The superiority in virtue over the generality of her sex to which Fanny afterwards attained, might justly be said to owe its perfection to the early instructions of the amiable Emily, who, like a guardian angel, watched the infancy of her favourite, and took the advantage of that critical season when the human mind is fittest to receive the impression of piety, and which, like the seed time in agriculture, if once neglected cannot be retrieved. And whilst she was anxiously inculcating the principles of religion and virtue, she took especial care to eradicate every tendency to vanity or arrogance, from which even the best dispositions are not wholly exempt.

Lord Ellincourt's presents were but too well calculated to engender pride; and the praises he always lavished upon Fanny's person every time he saw her, would inevitably have rendered her vain, had not the watchful Emily repressed the rising emotions, and by expatiating upon the precarious tenure of personal charms, exposed as they are to the ravages of sickness, and certain decay of old age; and explaining the still more uncertain duration of human attachments, she awakened in the mind of her youthful auditor reflections that would have done honour to a girl double her number of years.

The effect Lord Ellincourt's attachment to Fanny had upon his mind, was of the most salutary kind. With the genuine spirit of paternal affection he was frequently calculating his expenses, and projecting curtailments of their extent, in order to purchase some advantage or pleasure for his darling; and to the astonishment of all the gentlemen of the turf, his lordship's stud at Newmarket was sold off, and the destructive amusement of horse-racing abandoned within a year after he took the whim of adopting Fanny, because he had made a determination to retrench, in order to have it in his power to make a settlement upon his favourite, which resolution it was impossible to put in practice whilst he kept up such an expensive establishment, and incurred such heavy losses as generally attended his gambling ventures.

Lady Ellincourt, who felt greatly pleased with the appearance of her son's reformation, gave every encouragement to his patronage of the little orphan, and even indulged him so far as to invite Fanny to spend a month with her during the summer's vacation, at her country seat, which lay in Yorkshire, on an estate that had been lately purchased for her, by her agent, and was celebrated for the antique grandeur of the house, and the beauty of the surrounding parks and grounds.

To this delightful retreat the happy Fanny was conveyed in Lady Ellincourt's coach; and no sooner had she entered the great hall, than she exclaimed in ecstasy, 'Oh! this is mamma Sydney's house; do let me see her.' And running forward, she made to a door opposite to her, and attempted to open it. The lock resisted her efforts. 'Pray open it for me,' said the child, turning to a servant. 'Mamma Sydney is in there! and I want to see her!'

Lord Ellincourt, who had arrived a few hours before his mother, now came into the hall. 'What is the matter with my Fanny?' said his lordship; 'what is the little girl doing there?' 'I want to see mamma Sydney,' replied Fanny, 'and I know she is in that room: she always used to sit there.'

'Were you ever in this house before, my love?' asked his lordship, astonishment painted on his countenance. 'O yes, papa, I used to live here; and this door you will not open for me is mamma Sydney's parlour.'

Lord Ellincourt ordered a servant to inquire for the key of the room, and turning to Fanny, he said, 'Your mamma Sydney cannot be in that room, for you see it is locked.' Fanny stood in the utmost agitation whilst the key was fetched, but appeared too much struck to speak a word. In the mean time Lady Ellincourt, who had been speaking to her steward relative to some alterations that had been lately made, came up to see what had arrested the attention of her son and Fanny. When she was informed of the child's assertion respecting the house; 'Some resemblance, I suppose,' said her ladyship, 'between this and the house where she formerly resided; but this could not be her mamma Sydney's house, because the estate belonged to a Mr. Hamilton, who had resided abroad some years before his death, and I purchased it of his heir. The place had not been inhabited from the time Mr. Hamilton went abroad, as its dilapidated condition plainly proved, at the time I took possession of it, about two years ago.' At this moment the servant brought the key, and the door was opened. Fanny ran into the room, but presently returned with a sorrowful countenance. 'Mamma Sydney is not there,' said she, her eyes full of tears; 'I wonder where she is gone.' 'Are you sure this is the room where your mamma Sydney used to sit?' asked Lady Ellincourt. 'Oh yes, ma'am,' replied Fanny; 'see here is her work-table!' And the child going up to the fire-place, raised a bracelet that seemed made for the convenience of holding a candlestick or book, for any body who chose to sit close to the fire. 'Mamma Sydney used to put her work-bag upon this, when she was working; and when she was doing nothing her snuff-box used to stand upon it,' said Fanny, 'and sometimes a book. And when she had done reading, she would put her spectacles into the mid-

dle of the book, and lay it down, and say to me, *Come, puss, you must divert me now.*’

Both Lord and Lady Ellincourt were very much struck with an account so distinctly given of an event so remote; and her ladyship said she would inquire the particulars relative to the former inhabitants of her mansion, and endeavour, if possible, to elucidate the mystery.

Fanny was now led about the spacious rooms and long galleries that distinguished the noble dwelling, by her beloved ‘*Papa*,’ and every now and then expressed her delight at the discovery of some old acquaintance either in the rooms or their furniture; and her recollection of trivial circumstances was so clear, that, notwithstanding the evidence that appeared to contradict the probability of Fanny’s having been formerly an inmate of Pemberton Abbey, neither Lord Ellincourt nor his mother could divert their minds from the belief that her account was correct.

Every inquiry was made amongst the tenantry, likely to elucidate the mystery, but to little purpose; their answers corresponded uniformly when compared together. No lady of the name of Sydney had resided in that house, or its vicinity; nor did they believe that Pemberton Abbey had been inhabited by any body besides the servants, who were left in care of it, since the departure of Mr. Hamilton, until it was purchased by Lady Ellincourt, a period of several years.

This was told Fanny; but she still persisted in her assertion, nor could any argument, for a moment, shake her opinion, or make her waver in her story. Of her removal from Pemberton Abbey she could give but a very imperfect account. She remembered having been in a carriage a long time, but whether she was carried, or by whom, she could not tell; all she knew perfectly, was, that her mamma Sydney did not go with her, and that the lady with whom she stayed for some days before she was left at Miss Bridewell’s, was very cross with her.

A wide field was here opened for conjecture, and Lord and Lady Ellincourt were left to wander in it, as all their efforts to obtain any light upon the subject failed of effect. A circumstance which occurred just before Fanny’s return to school served to increase the perplexity of their minds, and to raise their curiosity to a pitch of

impatience, very ill-suited to the suspense they were obliged to endure.

The apartment little Fanny slept in was in the same gallery as Lady Ellincourt's, and divided from that room by a small chamber, which was occupied by her ladyship's woman. The screams of poor Fanny, one night, awakened Lady Ellincourt from a sound sleep, and starting from her bed the amiable lady threw on her dressing gown, and ran to the assistance of her favourite. Mrs. Parsons, her maid, was there before her, and was supporting the terrified child in her arms.

'What is the matter?' exclaimed Lady Ellincourt. 'My dear Fanny, what is the matter?' 'Mamma Sydney has been here: she came and looked at me; and when I spoke to her, she ran away, and would not answer.' 'You have been dreaming, my love,' said Lady Ellincourt.—'No, indeed, ma'am, I was wide awake,' replied the child; 'I heard her open my door, and saw her come up to the bed, with a candle in her hand; and she looked so angry when I spoke to her, that she frightened me out of my wits. Pray, dear Lady Ellincourt, call her back, and beg her not to be angry with me.' 'My dear child,' answered her ladyship, 'this is mere fancy, I assure you. Nobody *could* come into your room without being heard by Parsons.' 'I heard nothing, I assure your ladyship,' said Mrs. Parsons, 'until Miss Fanny screamed out; and I was not asleep, for I had been indulging myself with a book.'

It was with great difficulty that Lady Ellincourt succeeded in pacifying the terrified Fanny, who lay trembling, and in the greatest agitation. 'The poor child has been frightened through a dream,' said the compassionate lady; 'so take her into my bed, Parsons: she shall not be left alone again to-night, or her nerves may suffer severely.' Mrs. Parsons obeyed her lady's commands, and Fanny was so delighted at being permitted to sleep with her dear benefactress, that she forgot her terror, and her tears gave way to such emotions of joy, that Lady Ellincourt was sensibly affected, by a proof of attachment so unquestionably exquisite.

The next day, however, Fanny persisted in her assertion, that she had really seen her mamma Sydney; nor could all Lady Ellincourt's dissertations on the strength of the imagination, during

the influence of dreams, avail any thing; the child still insisted that she was wide awake when the figure of Mamma Sydney had appeared before her, and that the noise of some door opening had awakened her. 'It seemed,' said she, 'as if a door had been forced open that had been long shut, for it made a bursting noise.' 'There is only the door that leads from Parsons' door to yours,' replied Lady Ellincourt, 'and that you know stood open; you must therefore have been mistaken, my dear Fanny.' Fanny shook her wise head: 'I cannot tell *how* it could be,' said she, 'but I am sure it *was* as I say.'

The room in which Fanny slept was panelled with cedar wood, which was carved in the most curious manner, and had no doubt been esteemed a *chef d'œuvre* of workmanship, at the time the house was built. The child's obstinacy respecting the person she had seen, impressed Lady Ellincourt's mind so strongly, that she sent for a carpenter to examine the wainscot with the most scrupulous exactness, in order to ascertain whether there was any secret entrance to the apartment.

The scrutiny, however, produced nothing to elucidate the mystery. The man declared the partitions perfectly sound; and asserted that it was an utter impossibility that they should conceal any way of entering the room impervious to his minute investigation. This satisfied Lady Ellincourt; and she returned to her first opinion—i. e. that Fanny had been misled by a dream. And the circumstance was soon forgotten by the child, as no recurrence of the same terror could happen, as her joy at sleeping with Lady Ellincourt had endeared her so much to that lady, that she was permitted to remain the partner of her bed during her stay at Pemberton Abbey, from whence she was conveyed to school, at the expiration of the vacation.

The Christmas following the Miss Barlowes left Miss Bridewell's, and poor Fanny lost her best friend in her beloved Emily. Her sorrow was somewhat assuaged, however, by an unexpected event. Mr. and Mrs. Barlowe had come to England to fetch their daughters, and the health of the latter was so delicate, that it was judged necessary to her recovery to breathe her native air for some time. She determined therefore to stay a year in England; and thus Emily Barlowe had frequent opportunities of visiting

her dear Fanny, as Mr. Barlowe entered into his daughter's feelings respecting the child with all the warmth of benevolence natural to his disposition. The high patronage the little orphan now enjoyed rendered all pecuniary aid unnecessary; but Mr. Barlowe knew enough of the world to believe that, notwithstanding *present* appearances, there might come a day when poor Fanny would find that friendship is no *inheritance*.

'If Lord Ellincourt should neglect to make any settlement upon his adopted child,' said the good gentleman, 'life is a precarious tenure; and how soon may the sweet girl be exposed to the frowns of a cruel world, or indeed, what is still worse, to the various snares which are constantly spread for indigent beauty, by the remorseless panders of opulent depravity!'

'Surely,' replied Emily, to whom this speech was addressed, 'surely, papa, Lord Ellincourt will not be so cruel as to leave the dear child unprovided for. His lordship seems so very fond of her that I should think such a thing impossible.'

'Lord Ellincourt is a very young man,' answered Mr. Barlowe; 'and, besides that, a very thoughtless one. I don't believe, by what I hear of him, that he ever did a good thing in his life before he patronized Fanny. Such men as he think little about death, although there is certainly no situation which is more exposed to mortality than that of a true votary of fashion, since, should their necks escape the perils of *charioteering*—their health, the intemperate excesses of midnight revels—their lives lie at the mercy of every reprobate with whom they associate; for should he choose to call them out for any frivolous offence, whether fancied or real, the imperious laws of honour forbid them to decline the combat: yes, such is the inverted order of things, that he who has dared to blaspheme his God in his common conversation, who has infringed the sacred rights of humanity upon the slightest temptation, and who has trampled, in their turn, every law, human and divine, as they opposed the gratification of his inordinate passions; such a man, I say, will tremble to act in opposition to the self-created law of the *Moloch* of these days, at whose shrine modern idolaters still sacrifice their children without remorse or contrition.'

If Mr. Barlowe had merely reasoned upon the subject of Fanny's

precarious situation, little merit could have been arrogated for such a negative proof of his regard for her; but that worthy gentleman had not so much of the Pharisee in his composition. He never discussed any subject, either moral or divine, without acting up to the principles he professed; and in this instance he went even farther than the common bounds of benevolence, for he provided for a contingency which appeared perfectly imaginary to every eye but his own.

Before Mr. Barlowe left England he vested five hundred pounds in the funds, in the name of Fanny, and appointed a trustee to apply it to her use, in case any thing should happen to render such an assistance necessary. As Fanny had no surname, Mr. Barlowe had described her actual residence at the time of the donation, and other circumstances proper to identify her, with a precision that proved his anxiety for her welfare, and his own kind heart, beyond the possibility of a doubt. The friend, to whom the trust was confided, was charged too, to give immediate notice, by letter, to Mr. Barlowe, should any accident happen to place Fanny in circumstances of necessity, as the generous gift was intended merely as a prelude to his further bounty, in case of such an event, as it had always been Mr. Barlowe's intention to indulge his daughter's wish of adopting the pretty orphan, if it could be done without prejudice to her favourite. And although Lord Ellincourt's bounty superseded that intention for the present, Mr. Barlowe still cherished the idea that the scheme might yet become both practicable and agreeable to all parties.

The amiable heart of the gentle Emily felt the most grateful impression of her father's kindness; yet, still she found it impossible to believe any thing that militated against the exalted opinion she had formed of Lord Ellincourt's goodness. The benevolence his lordship had evinced for her favourite, in that trying moment when her own heart was nearly broken at finding herself powerless in her cause, had first recommended him to her favour; the *agremens* of a handsome person, and highly-finished manners, had completed the conquest, and the gentle Emily had bestowed her affections, beyond the power of recalling them, upon the unconscious Ellincourt, before she even suspected such a thing was possible.

A father's anxious eyes had penetrated the guarded secret of her bosom; by them he had seen his daughter twice in Lord Ellincourt's company; he had observed too, with equal precision, that his lordship's ideas had never wandered towards the love-sick Emily, and his prudence suggested an immediate separation. It was this conviction, too, that had induced him to dwell with such force upon the general depravity of *fashionable* men, in his conversation with his daughter, which has just been related, hoping that his just strictures upon the manners of the great, would tend to weaken her partiality for Lord Ellincourt. But, alas! when the poets described love as a blind deity, they ought to have added that he was *deaf* also, and that his votaries were generally subject to the same infirmities.

Emily Barlowe had been accustomed to believe her father's opinions infallible; but on this occasion she either did not *hear* them, from the reason above mentioned, or they failed in their usual effect.

The year allotted for Emily Barlowe's stay in England soon glided away, and the mournful hour arrived that was to tear her from dear England—her tenderly-beloved Fanny—and from the contemplation of that admired countenance, whose smile never failed of imparting delight, and whose frown gave the thrill of anguish to her heart.

Fanny was at Lady Ellincourt's house, on a visit, at the time of the Barlowes' departure; and as Emily was a particular favourite with her ladyship, she was invited to spend the last week of her stay in London under the same roof with her *favourite*. This was a dangerous indulgence to the tender girl, who had now an opportunity of more frequently meeting with *another favourite*, not so congenial to her happiness as the blooming Fanny. Lord Ellincourt had always thought Emily Barlowe a sweet girl, and felt grateful to her for her kindness to Fanny; but he was too much accustomed to the boldness of modern ladies, whose beauty demands rather than wins admiration, to be easily charmed by unobtrusive merit, and soft feminine loveliness, veiled by the shade of general modesty.

His lordship felt surprised, therefore, to find what a charming girl he had so long regarded with indifference, when a more social

intercourse displayed those attractions to his notice, which had been hitherto concealed by the amiable diffidence of the lovely possessor. 'Upon my honour,' said his lordship, the morning after Emily's departure, 'upon my honour, I should have been desperately in love with Emily Barlowe, if she had staid a little longer. Where did she hide all her powers of charming so long? Most young ladies are to be known, now a-days, by conversing with them two or three times; at least, all that is *agreeable* in them; but this lovely creature seems to rise in one's estimation every time one converses with her; and I have never examined her blushing countenance of late, without discovering some beauty unobserved before, yet which appeared too striking to be overlooked by any but an insensible. Can you tell me, my dear mother, the reason of this late discovery?'

Lady Ellincourt smiled. 'The reason, my dear Edmund, lies in your own breast, where a growing partiality has beautified its object, and discovered charms impervious to any other vision.' 'What do not *you* admire Emily then?' asked Lord Ellincourt. 'I *do*, most sincerely,' answered her ladyship; 'but so I *always* did. I find no *new* beauties; she always appeared to me a lovely girl, both in mind and person.' 'I wish you had said before, that you thought her so,' replied Lord Ellincourt, with a thoughtful look. Lady Ellincourt smiled: 'I never wished to direct your choice, Edmund,' said she; 'but if it had fallen on Miss Emily Barlowe, I certainly should have started no objection. Her fortune is large, and her family unexceptionable: but she is *gone*, and you must endeavour to forget her.'

'That is impossible,' replied his lordship, whose imagination had grown warm in discussing the subject, 'I can *never* forget the charming Emily, and I have a great mind to follow her to Jamaica.' 'Take a little time for consideration,' said Lady Ellincourt; 'the fit *may* go off; a lover's *eternity* is not of long duration—sometimes.' 'You treat the matter lightly, my dear mother,' said Lord Ellincourt, 'but depend upon it you will find I am serious; in the meantime, I am glad to find this alliance does not come within the censure of ill-assorted matches, which I remember you once seriously warned me against.—Apropos, you said there was a melancholy instance, in our family, of the folly of such marriages. I wish

you would tell me the *long story*, as you styled it; I feel an inclination for such an indulgence: will you grant it me?" "With pleasure, my dear Edmund," replied Lady Ellincourt, "when we have time to get to the end of it, which is not the case now. This evening, however, I shall be at your service. Fanny is to return to Myrtle Grove this morning: her young companions will console her better than I can, for the loss she has sustained, or at least make her forget her sorrow, for that is the only remedy at her age." Lord Ellincourt said he would accompany his mother in her morning drive, and assist in taking their mutual favourite to school.

Fanny was now in her eleventh year, and beautiful as an angel. There was such an expression of innocence and sweetness in her countenance, that it was impossible not to love her; and although the tints of the rose, the lily, the violet, and the carnation, combined to render her complexion lovely, it was the emanation of her heavenly mind that gave that brilliancy to her countenance, which rendered it truly dazzling. Lord Ellincourt contemplated his lovely ward, as he sat opposite to her in his mother's barouche, and he was more than ever struck with her exquisite beauty. That sweet girl, thought he, must be protected with unceasing vigilance, or she will fall a sacrifice to some of the wretches her uncommon loveliness will not fail to attract around her. But, although Lord Ellincourt felt the necessity of protecting Fanny, he neglected the surest method of doing so, and thereby verified Mr. Barlowe's opinion of him, that he was a *thoughtless* as well as a *young* man.

We will now, however, set down Fanny at Miss Bridewell's, and jumping over a few hours, or *killing* them by any *fashionable* device, bring our readers to Lady Ellincourt's fire-side; where, her ladyship on one side, and her son on the other, they may listen to our next chapter, which contains a long story.



CHAPTER IV.

*A Long Story.*

‘**M**y father,’ said Lady Ellincourt, ‘was, you know, the Marquis of Petersfield; but at the time of his coming to age, there was very little probability of his ever attaining to that dignity, as he was only a very distant branch of the Trentham family, and no less than *thirteen* living claimants, besides the chance of their having children, stood between him and the title; yet such is the mutability of all human tenures, that, notwithstanding these opposing obstacles, my father became Marquis of Petersfield by the time he was eight-and-thirty. He was then a widower, with two children—my dear lamented brother and myself. Happy would it have been for us had he never been induced to re-enter the pale of wedlock! My father had doted on my mother, and he transferred his affections to her children, when she was borne from him by a premature death. Never was a fonder parent, a more indulgent friend, than he always approved himself to us, whilst we were so happy as to share his love between us.

‘My brother was nearly three years older than I was, and the most perfect friendship existed between us from the first dawn of reason. My beloved Seymour was of so sweet a disposition that he made it his study to render me happy; and the little superiority he had over me, in point of age, rendered him at once my instructor and playmate. At the time of my father’s second marriage, I had just attained my fourteenth year, and Seymour was seventeen.

‘The lady selected for our mother-in-law was every way my father’s inferior, both as to rank and fortune; being merely the daughter of a subaltern officer, who had been educated as half-boarder at a school of repute, and from thence attained to the employment of governess to two overgrown girls of fashion, whose ill-judging mother had engaged Miss Henderson to relieve her from the irksome task of *entertaining* her daughters; for *instruction*

had been long out of the question with the pupils committed to her care. The eldest, Miss Howard, was seventeen at the time Miss Henderson entered Lady Howard's family, and the youngest considerably turned of fifteen.

'The girls were co-heiresses, and perfectly aware of their approaching independence. Their fortunes were to be at their own disposal the very day of their coming of age.

'Miss Henderson was artful enough to consult her own interest rather than the improvement of her pupils; she accordingly indulged their most capricious fancies, and entered into their most unreasonable projects with a degree of patient perseverance, that succeeded in rendering her indispensable to their happiness. This was just what Miss Henderson had intended, and she exulted in the success of her schemes. Instead of being dismissed when her pupils were presented, as is usual with governesses in general, Miss Henderson was retained as their companion, with an increased salary, that she might be enabled to visit with them, in a style of elegance suitable to the appearance of the ladies she accompanied. This much wished for intercourse with the fashionable world, introduced Miss Henderson to my father, and her ambition was fired with the hopes of obtaining his notice as a lover, which hopes were afterwards but too fatally realized, for the welfare of my unfortunate brother and myself. Miss Henderson was the epitome of every thing that is hateful in woman; artful, designing, and insatiably ambitious.

'In the subordinate station she had hitherto filled, it had been necessary for her to display the most unvarying complaisance. She had appeared, therefore, to my father's infatuated fancy, a gentle, timid creature, whose diffidence and unassuming modesty veiled half the perfections of her mind; and he exulted in the thought of bestowing upon his children a mother-in-law, who would be as solicitous for their welfare as he was himself. Unhappy delusion! which cost him but too dear! No sooner was Miss Henderson raised to the rank of Marchioness of Petersfield, than all her complaisance, her humility, and her gentleness, vanished like the fading meteor.

'The most haughty airs, the most intolerable caprice, were instantly displayed by the new-made peeress, and *felt* by every

unfortunate creature who came within the circle of her power. To my brother she took the most inveterate dislike, from the first week of her marriage; and *Lord Durham's* extravagance, and *Lord Durham's* idleness, the unformed rudeness of his manners, soon became the unfailing theme of her invective. Whilst he was at home the poor youth never enjoyed a moment's respite from her malice; and when he returned to college, his bills were censured, his allowance curtailed, and every vexatious torture inflicted upon him, which cruelty could invent, or ingenuity devise. To me she was more indulgent, for she felt not the same jealousy of *my* existence, which disturbed her with regard to my brother.

'She was ambitious of becoming the MOTHER, as well as the wife, of a marquis; and the birth of a son, the year after her marriage, rendered her more formidably malicious to *Lord Durham*, than she had ever been before. At the age of nineteen my dear brother was sent abroad, to give that necessary finish to polite education, which used to be acquired by visiting the different courts of Europe, but which has been impracticable ever since French anarchy has convulsed every European state with war and faction. The evening before his departure, the amiable youth was in my dressing-room, passing the last few hours of his stay in the parental mansion, with the only person who appeared to lament his departure. My father's affection had long been weaned from him by the artifices of his cruel mother-in-law.

"My dear Catharine," said *Lord Durham*, pressing my hand as he spoke, "I am at this moment labouring under an affliction of which your gentle breast has no idea. The pangs I feel at parting from my sweet sister are severe indeed; but what will she say when I assure her that there exists *another dear one*, from whom I cannot tear myself without feelings of agony, nothing inferior to those which part the soul and body?" "Good heavens!" exclaimed I, "what means my dearest Seymour?" "I mean," replied the sweet youth, "that I have undone myself by my imprudence, and that I have involved the most amiable of her sex in my ruin—I am married!" "Married!" repeated I; "and to whom?" "To an angel," rejoined he, wringing his hands in agony. "Oh! Caroline, your heart will bleed for her, when

you know her." "Have you never hinted your situation to my father?" inquired I, trembling as I spoke; for I perceived such a wildness in my brother's looks, that it alarmed me beyond expression. "I never touched upon the subject but once," answered he, "and then I was silenced in a manner too decisive to admit of my again renewing it."

"But who is the lady?" said I. "You forget my anxiety, for I am sure you would not trifle with it." "You know Lady Emily Hinchinbroke." "I do," replied I; "but surely it is not her, the daughter of my father's deadly foe; the man who would have deprived him of life." "It is, it is," exclaimed Seymour, in an agony of grief. "Ah! why did I ever behold her face? Why was I ever taught the inestimable value of an affection that has undone me? But I will no longer keep you in suspense; the mournful story is a short one:—

"I became acquainted with the fascinating Emily whilst on a visit to Lord Riversdale, her maternal uncle, whose son has always been my most intimate friend at college; the attachment was mutual; and I really believe its violence was increased by the certainty that it never could be approved by our parents. A secret correspondence has been carried on these two years between us; and at length, in a fit of desperation, it was determined that we should be asked in church, and married, as we were both under age, and could not be united by any other means. This plan was the suggestion of Sir Henry Poulet, Lord Riversdale's son, who has been our confidant from the beginning of our attachment. In a fatal hour we both acceded to it. Emily was on a visit at Lord Riversdale's, in Berkeley Square; and as I visited there every day, with the freedom of a son, the unfortunate scheme was but too easily accomplished.

"It is now about five months since we were united, and already have we deeply repented our imprudent rashness; and yet our repentance does not originate in any decay of affection, far from it, our love is more tender, more ardent than ever; but, alas! we see too plainly the fatal consequences of our impatience. My own sufferings would be nothing in my eyes, were it not for those entailed upon my Emily. Oh! that any selfish gratification should have induced me to fill that heart with sorrow, that beats

only for me! The secret has hitherto been kept inviolable, and I believe unsuspected; but that security is at an end, for Lord Somertown has fixed upon a husband for his daughter, and she has received notice to prepare herself for the event. The rich Marquis of Alderney is his intended son-in-law. Emily entreats me to leave her to the developement of our unhappy secret, and assures me that she considers it a fortunate circumstance that I am about to leave England, as she thinks her father's anger will cool sooner when he feels the impossibility of wreaking it upon me. But these arguments have little weight with a heart so anxious as mine; and I would rather brave his utmost fury than leave my angel Emily to encounter the slightest share of his resentment. I have done every thing in my power to delay my journey, but nothing can avail me to protract my departure any longer, unless I make a premature discovery, which must inevitably prove fatal to us both. I am constrained, therefore, to abandon her my soul holds dearest upon earth, at the moment she stands most in need of my support.

"All our hopes rest upon some accidental rupture of the marriage treaty, between Lord Somertown and the Marquis of Alderney. If Emily could but remain unmolested until I am of age, every thing would be well. Henry Poulet has promised to give me notice, should any violent step be taken with my Emily, that I may fly to her succour; for what barriers could prevent me from returning, if her danger called for my protection? No impediment that seas, rocks, or mountains can present, could for an instant intimidate a mind absorbed as mine is, by one object dearer than life itself."

'I listened to this recital of my brother's unfortunate story with an aching heart, too well acquainted with the animosity that existed between Lady Emily's father and my own, to form the slightest hope of their ever being reconciled; my prophetic eye beheld in an instant the phial of vengeance poured upon their devoted heads. Lady Petersfield I knew would aggravate every thing likely to render my brother obnoxious to my father's anger; and I too plainly foresaw that the unpropitious union would not be long a secret. Yet still I thought it better that my brother should not be within reach of Lord Somertown's vengeance

during the first emotions of fury that would follow the fatal discovery; I therefore urged his immediate departure; and, endeavouring to veil my own agonized feelings, I spoke the words of hope, whilst my heart trembled with terror. My faltering accents, however, but ill-accorded with the cheerfulness I wished to inspire. Seymour wrung my hand, whilst agony was painted on his countenance. "It is in vain, my sister, that you attempt to console me—that pale cheek—that quivering lip, and tear-fraught eye, but too plainly tell me what you think of our situation. The die is cast, and our fate is irrevocable. To heaven I commend my Emily. Ah, surely innocence, such as hers, will not be forsaken! And yet, why should I abandon her? No! I will stay, and brave the worst; I will this night confess my marriage to my father, and implore his protection for my adored wife. He will not, I am sure, be able to resist the eloquence of a love like mine."

"For heaven's sake," interrupted I, "think no more of such a mad scheme, replete with instant ruin. You talk of softening my father by your eloquence; but oh! tell me who shall be found sufficiently skilled in persuasion to soothe the anger of Lord Somertown? You are both under age; the marriage can therefore be set aside; and you may depend upon it that would be the first step her vindictive father would take, should you, by a premature discovery, put it into his power to do so. You are going abroad; when you return you will be of age. It will be easy to find an opportunity of rendering your marriage indissoluble by repeating the ceremony; and who knows what accidents may intervene, during the period of your absence, that may render its renewal more propitious? Lord Somertown is not immortal; and should he die, I am sure my father's animosity will die with him. He is too good a man to visit the sins of the father upon the innocent offspring."

"True, my dear sister," replied Lord Durham. "But instead of the fair prospect you endeavour to place before my eyes, suppose my Emily's stern parent should insist upon her giving her hand to another; what will become of the timid girl, unsupported as she will then be by the husband for whose sake she must brave the brutal fury of that most vindictive man?" "Should any treaty of

marriage be likely to be brought to a conclusion," said I, "it will then be time enough for you to return and acknowledge your marriage. I promise to take the first opportunity of getting an interview with Lady Emily. I visit a lady who is intimate with her. We will then lay a plan for carrying on a correspondence; and I promise to inform you of every movement which seems likely to threaten your beloved Emily with danger." "Kind, beloved sister!" exclaimed my brother, pressing my hand, "I will rely on your friendship, and be guided by your advice; and believe me it is no small consolation to me, in this hour of trial, to possess a confidant so ready to sympathize in my sufferings."

Soon after this conversation my brother took his leave, and I passed the remainder of the night in tears and lamentations, without attempting to undress myself or go to bed. At the peep of day I heard the carriage, that was to convey him away, come to the door. I crept to my window, and saw him step into it, attended by his tutor; the door closed upon him, and the rattling of the wheels was soon lost in distance. I listened to the last faint sound; and throwing myself upon my bed, I exclaimed, He is gone! I shall see that beloved face no more. My tears nearly suffocated me, and I sank upon my pillow in an agony of woe. Alas! my words were prophetic—I saw the noble youth no more! He was doomed to fall beneath the murderous steel of an assassin! But I must not anticipate the catastrophe.

Lord Durham was no sooner gone, than our cruel mother-in-law set every engine to work to ruin him with his father. Through the medium of a discarded servant from Lord Somertown's, she learned the secret of my brother's attachment to Lady Emily. Of the marriage, however, she knew nothing, nor do I believe a suspicion of such a circumstance ever crossed her imagination. This was, however, sufficient to exasperate my father. The bare idea of a connexion between his son and the daughter of his implacable enemy filled him with fury; and so artfully did his unprincipled wife work upon his irritated feelings, that he took a solemn oath never to see his son again, if he persisted in his choice of Lady Emily for a wife.

This resolution was communicated to my unfortunate brother, in a letter from his incensed father, who imprecated the most

dreadful maledictions upon his son's head, should he dare to act in disobedience to his commands.

' My brother was at Nice when he received the fatal mandate, and he pursued his way to Italy, with a heart nearly broken with anguish and remorse. In the meantime I had fulfilled my promise of cultivating Lady Emily's friendship; and I often had the satisfaction of observing that the sweet girl seemed to receive the most salutary consolation from our mutual confidence. We could not meet openly, but we enjoyed our friendly intercourses, unsuspected, at the house of a third person. Poor Lady Emily's health began to decline rapidly. She became pale and thin, and the depression of her spirits seemed to increase daily. She was so urgent for me to pass as much time as possible with her, that I often went imprudent lengths to gratify her; and the consequence was, that the implacable Lady Petersfield discovered our intimacy, by means of some of her spies. This was fresh food for her malice; and she did not fail to make use of it to the destruction of the unhappy lovers.

' Lady Emily had shown so much firmness in the refusal of the Marquis of Alderney's addresses, that her father, who did not in the least degree suspect the cause of it, yielded to her obstinacy, and dismissed the lover. What then was his fury when he was informed by a letter from Lady Petersfield, that there was a secret correspondence carried on between his daughter and Lord Durham? The letter was couched in terms of haughty defiance, and implied to have been written by my father's order. It contained a peremptory injunction to put a stop to the connection, or to *tremble* for the consequences.

' No language could do justice to the rage that agitated the furious earl when he had read the fatal letter. He sent for Lady Emily into his presence; and so violent was the paroxysm of his anger, that he would certainly have made her its victim, by destroying her the instant she came before him, but for the timely interference of a servant, who came to her assistance, and forcibly dragged her from her enraged father, at the peril of his own life, and conveyed her out of her paternal mansion before Lord Somerton was aware of his intention. The sweet girl lay concealed in an obscure lodging for several days; and the servant having dis-

THE LITTLE MENDICANT.

appeared also, the voice of scandal soon spread the report that Lord Somertown's daughter had ran off with her father's footman.

'Lady Petersfield took care to have several paragraphs respecting this pretended elopement inserted in different papers, and collecting the various reports together, she made a packet of them, and sent them with Lord Durham's letters to Florence. A letter from me, however, went by the same mail, which informed my brother of Lord Somertown's ill-treatment of Lady Emily, and her fortunate escape from his tyranny. I assured him his beloved Emily was in safe hands, and had determined to return no more to her father, as she found herself in a fair way of becoming a mother, and therefore knew too well the fatal consequences of such a circumstance being known to her father, to risk so dangerous a step. I endeavoured to inspire my brother with a degree of confidence I did not feel myself; but my letter produced the contrary effect, for it made him take the rash resolution of returning immediately to England.

'His tortured mind beheld his beloved wife exposed to every danger, both from relations and strangers; oppressed by her father, traduced by the world, and defenceless amidst a host of enemies. The picture was too horrible to dwell upon, and without giving me any notice of his intention, the unfortunate youth set out on his retrograde journey. In the meantime every effort was made by Lord Somertown to discover the retreat of his daughter, but without success; she still eluded his vigilance, and was so fortunate as to reach the house of a generous friend, who had determined to run all risks for her sake, without any suspicion being awakened among the numerous spies who were upon the watch to detect her movements. As soon as I was informed of this lucky circumstance, I wrote the pleasing news to my brother, little imagining that he was on his way to England, regardless of danger, and impatient of delay.

'At this time my father removed his family to the country for the summer, and I was under the necessity of accompanying him. This was a cruel trial to me, as I found it very difficult to obtain any intelligence of Emily, as it was impossible to write to her by direct means; and the tedious methods I was forced to adopt, rendered my suspense and anxiety intolerable. At length the

agreeable news reached me that she had given birth to a daughter, and was in a fair way to do well.

' How did I exult at that moment in the pleasing reflection that the sweet infant had escaped the fury of Lord Somertown, from whose vindictive rage I felt the most dreadful apprehensions. Alas! I had but little time for exultation, as a very few days only elapsed before the deepest sorrow overwhelmed me, in the premature death of the most amiable of brothers. Lord Durham had pursued his journey to England with such unremitting diligence, that he arrived in London before I thought it probable he had received my letter.

' Disappointed at not finding me in town, he wrote to me in haste to inquire the retreat of his beloved Emily. This letter, by one of those unlucky chances that too frequently occur in clandestine proceedings, fell into the hands of our implacable mother-in-law.

' Lord Durham's hand-writing was well known to her; and as the London post-mark struck her eye, her fertile imagination presented the possibility of my brother's return to England on Lady Emily's account. Lady Petersfield had no idea that the unhappy pair were already united, but supposed that Lord Durham had been brought back by Emily's entreaties, that the union might be cemented. There was nothing Lady Petersfield dreaded more than my brother's marrying; and she naturally concluded, as he was so much attached to Lady Emily, if she could but prevent the marriage, there would be little danger of his making another choice. Full of these ideas, therefore, the cruel woman carried my brother's letter to my father, without breaking the seal; and imparting her sentiments to him upon the subject, left it to his own option whether he would read it or not. My father did not hesitate a moment, but tearing open the fatal letter, he soon became master of the carefully concealed secret.

' Good heavens! what a scene followed! I was sent for by my enraged parent, and loaded with every epithet anger could dictate or passion utter. In accents scarcely articulate from fury, he demanded the place of Lady Emily's retirement, and said he would not only disinherit, but instantly renounce me, if I refused to satisfy him on that head. His threats had, however, no other

effect than that of determining me to keep the secret inviolable. "Oh! my father," said I, throwing myself on my knees before him; "oh! my father, spare your unhappy daughter, and tempt her not to betray confiding friendship. I have solemnly sworn not to reveal to any one the retreat of my unhappy sister; and I cannot break the sacred vow, though you were even cruel enough to fulfil your dreadful threats, and crush me beneath the weight of your vengeance."

"Begone from my presence, serpent," said my father; "begone, or I shall curse thee! How soon does a girl, when she is made the confidant of a romantic love story, lose all sense of duty, all shame of acting rebellious to her parents. You talk of friendship with your father's bitter enemy; and would prefer wounding his heart to the unpardonable crime of betraying this highly prized friend. But call her not your sister; at your peril give her not that name. She is not—she cannot be that. No marriage can be good which is contracted by a minor; and I will take care your brother shall have no opportunity of renewing the contract. Begone to your apartment, girl, and in that retirement endeavour to recal to your perverted mind some sense of filial duty. I forbid you to leave your room until I withdraw the prohibition; and if you value your brother's happiness attempt not to write to him."

"I obeyed my father's harsh mandate in silence, and retired slowly to my room, where I had the mortification of finding myself constantly attended, and closely watched by Lady Petersfield's confidential friend—a creature who seemed to bear an instinctive hatred both to my brother and myself.

"In the meantime my father wrote to Lord Durham, and informed him that having come to a knowledge of his most unpardonable misconduct, in attaching himself to Lady Emily, he offered him his pardon, on one condition only, namely, to return immediately to the continent, without attempting to see the object of his imprudent choice. "All efforts to obtain an interview," added my father, "will prove ineffectual, and only serve to expose you to my just resentment, as Lady Emily is now in her father's house, where I hope she will recover a proper

sense of her duty, and no longer endeavour to seduce you from yours."

The receipt of this letter, instead of intimidating my brother, as it was intended to do, had a contrary effect, and determined him instantly to declare his marriage to both families, and demand his wife. Full of this resolution, he wrote a letter to his father, acknowledging his fault in having taken a step of such importance without his sanction, but at the same time declaring that it was his fixed resolve to abide by the consequences, be they what they might, and live only for his Emily. "I am going," added he, "to demand her of her cruel father, for she shall no longer remain under his tyranny."

The letter concluded with a most affecting entreaty for pardon, and an appeal to Lord Petersfield's parental feelings in behalf of his unfortunate son. As soon as my brother had dispatched this letter, he flew to Lord Somertown's, and requested an interview with his lordship. To his surprise he was immediately admitted. Lord Somertown received him with haughty coldness, but without any appearance of the violence he had expected. Encouraged by this, Lord Durham entered upon an immediate explanation of his marriage with Lady Emily, and in a mild, but determined manner, desired to be allowed to see her.

"Who told you she was in my house?" asked Lord Somertown. "My father," replied Lord Durham. "The information is worthy the informer," rejoined the exasperated earl, whose countenance now bore testimony to the rage that boiled within his bosom. "I will tell you what, young man," added he, in a voice scarcely articulate through stifled fury; "I will tell you what, you have injured me beyond the reach of remedy, and I *will* have vengeance. Remember! I tell you so. As to my daughter, she is not, nor ever shall be your wife. Much sooner would I see her expire beneath the tortures of the rack, than acknowledge such an union. Your boasted marriage is null and void, for you are both under age. Name it not again, for I will annul it."

"My marriage is valid, and no power *can* annul it," replied Lord Durham; "we were married at our parish church, after having the banns published three times, in the same place, according to the form prescribed; and had you, my lord, attended

public worship, as you ought to do, you would have had an opportunity of forbidding the banns, if the marriage did not meet with your approbation."

"Vile traitor!" exclaimed Lord Somertown, "begone from my presence;" and he rang the bell for the servants to turn my brother out, which they did by force, with the most insolent brutality.

"Remember," cried Lord Somertown, as the men were dragging my brother out, "remember I will annul the marriage; there are more ways than one of doing it. No Trentham shall unite with my family, and *live*." When my brother returned home, he wrote a letter to me, relating all that had passed at Lord Somertown's, and entreating me to inform him whether his Emily was, indeed, under her father's roof.

"My brother desired me to endeavour to soften his father in his favour, and to lend him what assistance I could, in finding his beloved wife. The writing of this letter was the last action that was known of the unfortunate youth's life. A note had been given him, whilst he was employed in it, and as soon as he had finished it he took his hat, and went out. His servant waited up for him until the dawn of day, and felt great alarm at his staying out, as it was very unusual with my brother to do so." When the porter got up, Lord Durham's valet went to bed, and having slept till nine o'clock, found his anxiety greatly increased, when he learned that his lord had not yet returned.

"My father, on the receipt of my brother's letter, had set immediately off for London, and arrived there late the same night. The house was in the utmost confusion when he alighted from his carriage, as the bleeding body of my brother had just been found in Kensington Gardens, and recently owned by his affectionate valet, whose anxiety for his master's safety had led him all over the town in search of him. The report of a wounded gentleman being found in Kensington Gardens soon reached his ears, and he flew to the spot whither Lord Durham had been conveyed by the persons who found him, and where surgical aid had been administered in vain; for although my dear brother showed signs of life for several hours after he was found, he never spoke, nor gave the least token of sensibility, and every

glimmering of hope was fled, and the last faint struggle over, before poor Graham arrived, who instantly recognised his beloved master, when he looked upon his lifeless corpse, disfigured as it was by wounds and blood; and on searching his pockets narrowly, a note, which had escaped the notice of the first examiners, was found, which Lord Durham had received only a few minutes before he left his father's house, and which, no doubt, led him to the spot where he was murdered.

* The hand-writing was an imitation of Lady Emily's, and the words were merely these—"Precisely at five o'clock this afternoon you will find a person at Kensington Garden gate, who will lead you to your faithful wife.—Emily."

* A latent hope of reviving his dear lord, notwithstanding his lifeless appearance, and the opinion of the surgeon, had induced poor Graham to have my brother conveyed home, where every aid was immediately summoned that anxiety and affection could suggest; but human help was of no avail, the vital spark had fled, and the inanimate body was incapable of receiving succour.

* The fatal sentence had just been pronounced by the surgeons Graham's care had assembled, at the moment of my father's arrival. It is impossible to describe the agony of that distracted parent, when the fatal news was revealed to him. He had set out on his journey with sentiments of the most violent anger towards his son, and determined at all events to annul the marriage, which was the cause of his displeasure, little expecting to find it for ever set aside by a catastrophe so fatal. The circumstances of my poor brother's being discovered were extraordinary. Two men, employed in the gardens, had heard the report of two pistols, whilst they were at the opposite side of the gardens; they both agreed that it was a duel, and made the best of their way towards the spot the sound appeared to come from.

* They were some time, however, before they found any thing to confirm their suspicions. As it was a rainy day no person was walking: and when they had looked in vain for some traces of the supposed duelists, they were about to abandon their opinion, and return to their work, when one of them stumbled over something lying on the grass, and on stooping to examine what it was, found a pistol. This circumstance reviving their former suspicion, they

made a diligent search, and soon afterwards discovered my unfortunate brother lying extended at the foot of a large tree, whose spreading branches had so darkened the spot, that the long grass concealed him, until the men were close to him. His hat was off, and lay at some distance from him, and a pistol unloaded lay close beside him. Some faint signs of life, that appeared on a close examination, induced the men to lift him from his cold bed, and convey him to the nearest public house ; though a fear for their own safety had well nigh deterred them from the charitable act, as the mysterious circumstances of his death rendered it but too probable that they might be suspected of murdering him. Their humanity triumphed over their fears, and they acted the part of the good Samaritan. On their entrance in the public house, the men desired the landlord to examine the dear youth's pockets, when his purse was found, containing a considerable sum of money, and his watch, which was a gold repeater of great value ; which proved beyond a doubt that he had not been robbed.

'From a fear of getting into trouble, the landlord of the public house where my brother lay had summoned the coroner with the utmost dispatch, and an inquest was held upon the body before it was cold. At this investigation it had been decided that the gentleman had been killed in a duel with some person unknown ; as the two pistols being found at a distance from each other, proved he had not put an end to his own existence ; and his property being untouched, was a presumptive evidence that he had not fallen by the hand of a robber. The mournful ceremony was over before the arrival of Graham, who reprobated their precipitation in the strongest terms, exclaiming, 'That he was sure his dear master was not dead, but had only fainted through loss of blood.'

'He had his lord removed, therefore, as soon as a litter could be provided, with the tenderest caution ; but, as I have already related, disappointment was the sad result of all the faithful creature's endeavours.

'The consequences of this mournful event was a serious fit of illness to my father, whose agonized feelings were too much for his constitution ; he reproached himself incessantly with his son's death, believing his own severity had driven him on his ruin. Notwithstanding the circumstance of two pistols being found at a dis-

tance from each other, my father always thought that Lord Durham had killed himself; although the note found in his pocket by Graham, but too plainly pointed out the mournful truth, and left not a shadow of doubt upon my mind that my brother had been trepanned by the vile forgery into the power of an assassin; who that assassin was has never been discovered, though I must own my suspicions rested on one person only, either as the principal, or at least the employer. My father sent for me the day after he took his bed, and endeavoured by his tenderness to atone for the harsh manner in which he had treated me.

‘He mentioned his intentions of acknowledging Lady Durham and her infant, and sent me to the place of her concealment, with a kind message to that purport.

‘But, alas! a new sorrow was prepared for me. The retreat of the unfortunate Emily had been discovered by her implacable father, who forcibly conveyed her to one of his own mansions in a distant country. The lovely creature had refused to part with her child, who was accordingly permitted to accompany her in her banishment.

‘My father received the news of this fresh act of cruelty with real concern. He had rested his hopes of conciliating his uneasy conscience by showing to the beloved wife of his lamented son the deep penitence he felt for his former cruelty, and endeavouring to atone for it by every act of tenderness her forlorn situation required. This mournful satisfaction was, however, denied him; and he took on so heavily, that his grief produced a train of disorders, which soon became fatal. He survived his son only thirteen months. During the whole of that melancholy period, I lived totally secluded from society. Lady Petersfield endeavoured in vain to displace me from my father’s sick-room; I was tenacious of my post as head-nurse, and as my services appeared more agreeable to my unhappy parent than any other person’s, all her manœuvres were fallacious.

‘When her ladyship found I was stationary, she came less frequently into the apartment, and soon returned to her gay habits, without concerning herself about the invalid, whom she represented as an hypochondriac to all her acquaintance. Indeed her ladyship’s spirits appeared better than ever, after my dear brother’s death.

Her favourite point was obtained, her son was now Lord Durham. She heard of my brother's marriage, and that there was a child; but her indefatigable genius soon discovered that it was a daughter, and therefore not to be feared. During the whole time my father lived, I received no letter from Lady Durham, nor could I gain any access to her by all the stratagems I could devise. Various and tormenting were the reports spread abroad of that interesting creature.

‘ Sometimes I heard she was in a deep decline; at others, that she had quite recovered her health and spirits, and was about to emerge from her retirement, and become the ornament of *ton*. I dared not to mention these vague rumours to my father, whose spirits became weaker every day, and whose remorse was frequently beyond the control of reason. At length the awful moment arrived—the agonized frame could no longer support the painful struggle—my poor father died of a broken heart, in his forty-ninth year, and left me an isolated being, without one friend to console me. I could not remain with Lady Petersfield, the sight of her was insupportable; I therefore removed as soon as I decently could to my Aunt Morrison's, where I remained until I married Lord Ellincourt, which event took place the ensuing year.

‘ The bustle of my marriage obliged me to mix more with the world, and by degrees I recovered a portion of my former spirits, yet still I heard nothing of my poor Emily that was satisfactory: she never appeared in public, and I had every reason to suppose she was a close prisoner in her father's gloomy mansion in Westmoreland. Seven years had elapsed without my obtaining any light upon the subject, when, one day, taking up the newspaper, I was struck by reading the following paragraph:—“ On Thursday died, at her father's seat, in Westmoreland, Lady Emily Hinchinbroke, only daughter of the Earl of Somertown: her ladyship had been long in a declining state.” I was inexpressibly shocked. “ Poor victim of implacable revenge,” said I, “ thou hast then escaped from thy dreary prison! But what, alas! is become of thy offspring?” The air of disclaiming her husband's title, in announcing Lady Durham's death, seemed to indicate that her child was no more.

‘ Eight years more elapsed before I was convinced this idea was

erroneous; I then received the following words, written in a beautiful small-hand:—

“ Dear Aunt,

“ I have been taught to love you by the best of mothers, and I do love you with all my heart, though I have never been so happy as to see you. My grandfather is gone to Ireland on some business, and my kind governess has promised to take me to your house, if you will condescend to receive your dutiful and affectionate niece,

EMILY TRENTHAM.”

“ I could not doubt that this letter came from my brother’s child, and I was delighted beyond measure with the sweet idea of folding her to my bosom. My answer may be guessed, and the next day the sweet angel was introduced to me. I will not pretend to describe what I felt when I beheld the most striking likeness of my injured Seymour, in the soft features of his lovely daughter. A more perfect beauty I never saw, nor a female so devoid of vanity. She seemed the very soul of affection, and capable of interesting the sternest heart in her favour. This opinion was confirmed by her governess, who assured me that Lady Emily had so won upon her grandfather, that she believed his lordship loved no other being upon earth but herself. The sweet girl could stay but a short time with me, but we often renewed the pleasure we experienced in meeting during Lord Somertown’s absence.

“ These visits were, however, suspended at his return, and a letter now and then, clandestinely exchanged, was all our consolation under the privation. I did not see the dear Emily again for two years, and then I found her every thing the fondest heart could wish, in mind and person: but there was an air of melancholy about her that greatly distressed me, as it appeared unnatural to her. She blushed when I questioned her, and replied that she would some day lay open every thought of her heart to me; but at present she must be excused. Alas! I saw her no more from that period, for about this time her cruel grandfather died; and I at first hoped, when I heard the news, that the lovely girl’s emancipation would follow. In this hope I was fatally mistaken; his son

and successor, the present lord, was the counterpart of his father, and seemed to consider his cruelty as much an inheritance as his estate.

‘In his hands the hapless Emily found another tyrant, and she was soon afterwards married, against her inclination, it is generally thought, to a nobleman, whose name I shall not now mention; and went over with him to Ireland immediately. I am astonished she has never written to me since, although I have addressed several letters to her, supposing that the restraint she formerly suffered had now been agreeably changed to liberty. A murmur which has lately reached me, respecting her present situation, makes me very unhappy; but as it has not yet been confirmed, I will pass it over in silence.

‘I hope, however, that my melancholy story has sufficiently impressed your mind with the truth of what I first advanced—That marriages, contrary to the express prohibition of parents, are generally unhappy, and often fatal.’

CHAPTER V.

A Modern Bluebeard.

‘**W**OULD you imagine my stupidity, my dear mother,’ said Lord Ellincourt; ‘I have been listening to your story with the most profound interest, because I took it into my wise head, that the *denouement* would prove my Fanny to be the daughter of your hero and heroine. A curious anachronism, certainly.’

‘Yes,’ replied Lady Ellincourt, ‘the daughter of my unfortunate brother is at least six years older than you are, and has been married several years.’

‘My sapience will be found a little more profound,’ said Lord Ellincourt, ‘in regard to the name of the nobleman who married that child of misfortune—I know him well.’

'How is that possible?' asked Lady Ellincourt, 'I am sure I never mentioned one of the personages in this mournful drama to you before. As Lord Somertown never acknowledged my brother's marriage with his daughter, nor would ever permit her unfortunate offspring to be called by his name, I have strenuously avoided adverting to the melancholy story even in my own family.'

'Your own family has learned some of the particulars, nevertheless,' answered Lord Ellincourt, 'as I will show you. About two months ago, I received a letter from my sister, which contains a long history of the lady you allude to, and who, by the bye, is wife to the Earl of Ballafyn, the Bluebeard of Ireland. You shall read Caroline's letter.'

'Pray let me look at it directly,' said Lady Ellincourt, 'for the account I had was a very imperfect one, and I did not dare to inquire more particularly, lest I should revive a tale which I wish to be forgotten.'

'I never liked Lord Ballafyn,' said Lord Ellincourt, 'I have been often in his company, during his visits to England, though I little thought he was related to me. By Caroline's account he is a monster in the form of a man, who not content with rendering an innocent woman wretched, has now taken the diabolical measure of blackening her character. I will bring the letter when I come to-morrow, but I am engaged this evening, and cannot possibly call again.'

'You are a provoking creature,' replied Lady Ellincourt, 'for I shall be upon thorns until I read Caroline's letter. I wonder she never mentioned the subject to me.'

'She knew that it would revive some disagreeable remembrances,' said Lord Ellincourt, 'and therefore she forbore to touch upon it. You will see her reasons, when you read her letter; for my part I did not understand to what event she alluded, until your melancholy recital explained the enigma. To curtail the endurance of your suspense, I will enclose my sister's letter to you in a cover, as soon as I return home; and then my dear mother can indulge her curiosity immediately.'

Lord Ellincourt kept his promise; and in a few hours his mother was in possession of the letter. It was as follows:—

‘ My dear Edmund,

‘ I am truly sorry to hear you do not intend visiting Ireland this year, as I had made up my mind to expect you; and my good lord has positively assured me that he cannot afford to take me with him, when he goes to England; we shall not meet therefore for many months. I had a story, so much in the marvellous, to entertain you with had you kept your word of spending the Christmas with us, and I had intended to reserve the surprise for a winter evening’s *delassement*; but now you must have it in a letter.

‘ You have frequently mentioned Lord Ballafyn’s brother, Col. Ross, as one of your intimates, and therefore I dare say you are no stranger to his lordship. Whether his beautiful exterior has the power of prejudicing his own sex in his favour, I cannot tell, but it has had but too much success with ours. Some years ago, this fascinating nobleman married one of the loveliest women England ever produced, and brought his bride with him to Ballafyn Castle, where she was looked up to as a divinity by all the guests who were admitted to the castle.

‘ Lady Ballafyn’s carriage was such as the strictest prudence, joined to the most unaffected modesty, would dictate: but the melancholy that seemed to prey upon her spirits excited the sympathy of many, and the curiosity of all. This was naturally supposed to originate in the treatment she received from her husband, who, although the greatest libertine that ever entered the pale of matrimony, took it into his wise head to be jealous of her, and led her a life suitable to his liberal ideas of female chastity.

‘ All this Lady Ballafyn bore with unrepining patience, and finding that her unreasonable lord appeared displeased with the admiration she excited, the charming Emily declined going into public as much as she possibly could.

‘ Lord Ballafyn permitted his wife to return to England for her lying-in, and she passed several months in her native country after that event; during which period the child died, and the poor lady returned to Ireland, in a state of mind bordering on melancholy, and never afterwards mixed with any company whatever. Lord Ballafyn’s visitors now consisted of gentlemen only; and Lady Ballafyn, either by her own choice, or his cruelty, inhabited

an obscure corner of the castle, where her very existence was nearly forgotten.

‘It is said that she has visited England once, during one of her lord’s absences, unknown to him; and that a discovery which he lately made of that transaction, has been the cause of the cruelty with which she has been treated within these few months. Such unheard-of barbarities were, I believe, never before practised, unless by his namesake, *Bluebeard*; which title has been bestowed upon his lordship, for his savage conduct, by all the ladies in the neighbourhood.

‘My maid assures me that the poor lady has been shut up for days together without provision, and that the monster has more than once lifted his ugly paw against her, and even dragged her by the hair of her head from one apartment to another. No person is suffered to have access to her; nor can any letter reach her hand, as she is surrounded by his creatures, and never left one moment to herself.

‘A few months ago, a young man of noble mien, and with the most beautiful countenance in the world, was seen creeping about the purlieus of the castle, and endeavouring to penetrate within its ponderous walls. His attempts were, however, fruitless; and at last he applied himself to one of the servants, whom he endeavoured to interest in his cause by a bribe, that showed however mean his apparel might be, that he was not in indigent circumstances.

‘The servant pocketed the bribe, and, like many of his betters, who do the same, without the least intention of earning what he had accepted, he listened to all the stranger had to say, and promised to obtain for him what he wished—namely, an interview with Lady Ballafyn. The hour of midnight was appointed for the meeting, and the unwary youth, trusting to his deceitful betrayer, was led into the presence of the exasperated lord; who, after loading him with every epithet of abuse, assured him that the only means of saving his life was by making a full confession of his own and Lady Ballafyn’s guilt. The youth listened to the base proposal with silent contempt, and when forced by his persecutors to answer the charge, he persisted in asserting the innocence of the traduced lady, and declared that she knew not of his coming, and therefore could not be culpable, if he was.

‘He refused to answer any farther questions, treating the threats of his persecutors with ineffable disdain. “To *die*,” said the gallant youth, “is no such mighty hardship, but to betray a trust is *impossible* to a man who thinks as *I do*.” He was kept several days prisoner at the castle, in order to extort some confession from him; but when Lord Ballafyn found him impervious to all his stratagems, he employed some of his myrmidons to get rid of him in a way that has not yet been properly ascertained. Some reports say that the stranger has been sent to T—— Gaol to take his trial the next assizes, as a housebreaker. Others, that he has been smuggled on board a transport lying at Y——— at the time, that was bound for the West Indies, whither he was sent as a recruit in a regiment going in that ship thither; the captain of which is a creature of Ballafyn’s. But my maid, who always deals in the marvellous as well as the horrific, assures me that he was thrown down the black rock, that hangs over the sea, a little distance from Ballafyn Castle, and that his ghost has been seen every moonlight night since, standing on the crag of the rock, and pointing to the restless surges beneath.

‘The people pretend that this interesting stranger resembled Lady Ballafyn so strikingly, that he might have been supposed to be herself in man’s attire.

‘It is impossible to hear stories like these with indifference; I confess, therefore, that I have been deeply interested by this tale, particularly so, as I understand the unfortunate lady is a near relation of ours. I don’t know whether you ever heard of an ill-fated marriage in our family, that caused my poor grandfather’s death. My mother could tell you the sad history more perfectly than I can; but I would not have you ask it, unless she leads to it herself, for I have heard that the sad consequences of that fatal union nearly overset her reason, during the first shock she sustained.

‘Lady Ballafyn is the offspring of that marriage, and seems to inherit the misfortunes of her parents. But to return to my own ideas on the subject. My imagination, which you know, my dear brother, is tolerably fertile, has formed half a score of romances out of the materials I have been able to collect, the most probable of which appears to me to resemble the pathetic

tale of 'Owen of Carron;' or, the tragedy of 'Douglas.' The stranger must be a son of Lady Ballafyn's, by a former marriage; and having just found out who is his parent, he has experienced the fate of the artless Owen, or the more magnanimous Douglas. And my maid says that the stranger appeared too old to be the son of Lady B. and if that be true, he *must* be her lover, and her lord is not quite so culpable as we think him. And yet he said Lady Ballafyn did not expect him, nor know any thing of his coming. He might therefore be a lover, though not a favoured one; and yet why did he not come before, if he meant to come at all? And if Lady B. did not know of his coming, how could he expect she would receive him, or, what end could he hope to have answered by so dangerous a step? In short, I am lost in a labyrinth of conjecture, and I heartily wish you were here, Edmund, to aid my search for the clue that must lead me out of it.

'I think it would have been a delightful feat of knight-errantry for you to have delivered the fair lady from the claws of her persecutor, which you might have done in the character of her nearest relation. Your intimacy with Colonel Ross would have gained access to the castle for you, and your own ingenuity must have accomplished all the rest. You see what a charming plan I had laid out for your winter's campaign, but your obstinate attachment to your own country spoils every thing. One thing I forgot, which is a material part of my story—Lord Ballafyn has publicly reported that his lady has been guilty of infidelity, and that, for that reason, he chooses to immure her in solitary confinement; he pretends that he has *detected* the crime he alleges against her, asserting that he has several letters in his possession that are irrefragable proofs of her delinquency.

'One of his lordship's friends ventured to ask him why he did not sue for a divorce from a woman, who reflected such dishonour upon his name. But he replied, that he knew that was what Lady Ballafyn wished, and therefore he was determined to disappoint her. This is his *ostensible* reason; but depend upon it the *real* one originates in his own evil conscience. How could a man demand justice upon his wife for a breach of faith who has a mistress in every place he inhabits? He keeps a very expensive lady in Dublin; another in England; and there is one who was

his favourite before he was married, who resides within the precincts of his own demesne; and this woman it is, they say, who instigates his cruelty to his suffering lady. What think you of our modern *Bluebeard*?

When Lady Ellincourt had perused her daughter's letter, she felt the most poignant affliction,

Some faint rumours had reached her that Lord Ballafyn had suspected his lady's fidelity, but as no steps were taken to obtain a divorce, Lady Ellincourt gave no credit to them. The miserable truth was now but too evident; her niece was in the hands of a cruel and abandoned libertine, and her character, and perhaps her life, would be sacrificed to gratify the malice and revenge of his depraved mistress. The sweet creature appeared destitute of friends to espouse her cause, and therefore wholly at the villain's mercy!

'Oh! my brother,' exclaimed Lady Ellincourt, clasping her hands in agony, 'my beloved brother, the sufferings of the innocent offspring awaken in my mind the sad remembrance of thy cruel death. The wounds of my heart are torn open, and bleed afresh, and I am still the same powerless creature, as when weeping thy misfortunes. I can only *lament*; to *remedy* is not within the compass of my power.'

CHAPTER VI.

Correspondence.

WHEN the first emotions of Lady Ellincourt's sorrow had subsided, she sat down to write to her daughter. Her letter contained a gentle reprimand for not immediately informing her of the mournful situation of her beloved niece, and requested her never to spare her feelings, in future, at the expence of her humanity. 'I know,' added she, 'that I am a poor powerless creature,

as to any thing I can do; but my mind suggests a measure which may, perhaps, be adverted to with success.

' Cannot you, my dear Caroline, find some generously disinterested person who could be persuaded to write to Lord Somertown, and state the actual situation of his niece. I have been told he is very fond of her; and I think if he knew how she is treated, he would find some means to redress her wrongs.

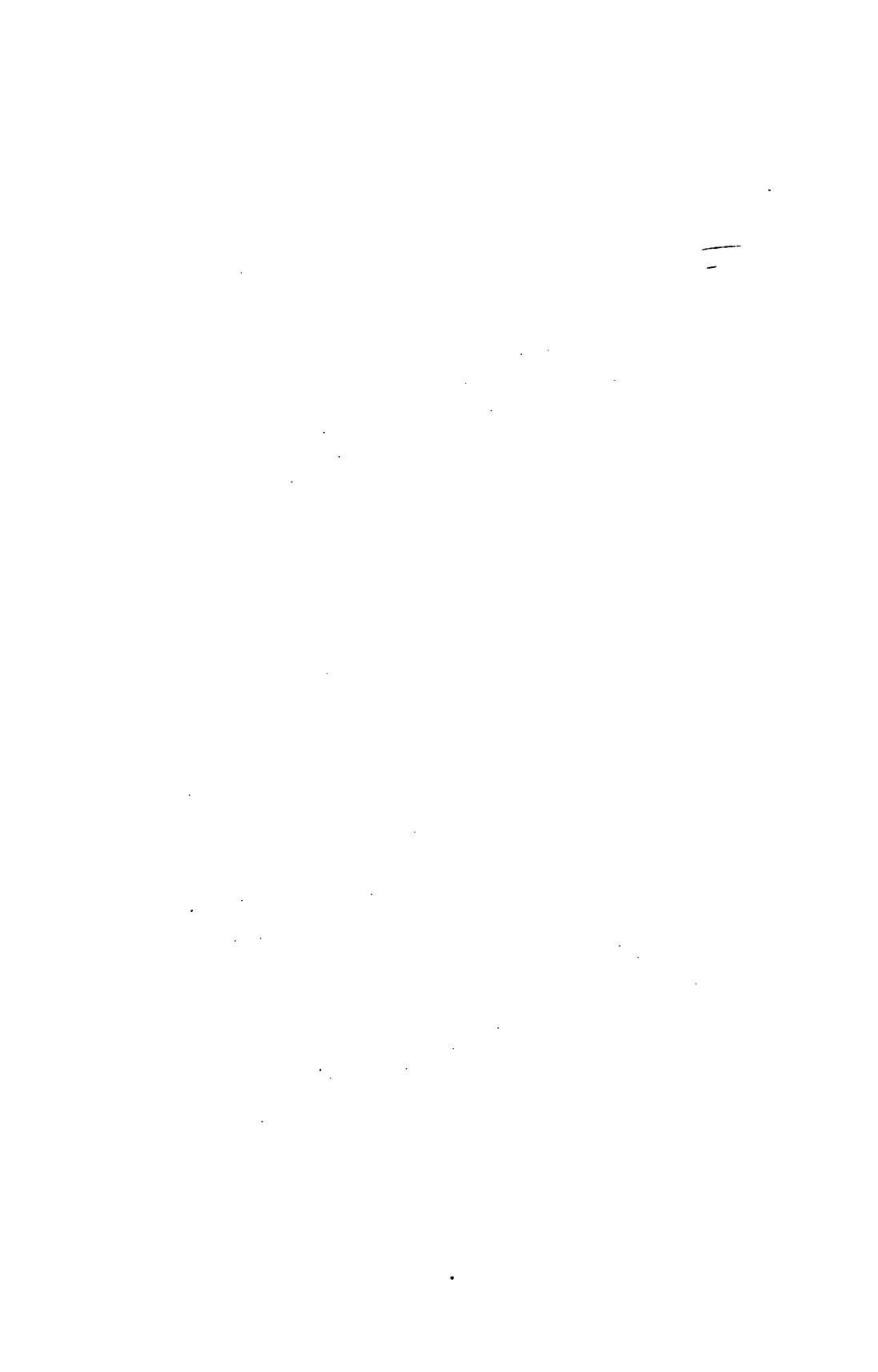
' The notice must not come from our family, or how readily would I fly to acquaint him with her peril; for my anxiety for my poor Emily would supersede every feeling of resentment in my bosom, and force me to act in concert with my bitterest enemy, so that her welfare appeared likely to result from such a coalition. I understand that Lord Somertown resides constantly now at his seat in Yorkshire, a prey to the most profound melancholy. I fear there is but too much cause for such a disposition. Reflection to a mind like his must be exquisite torture. Surely he will be glad of something to rouse him from the torpor of despair, and force him to exert all the energy he possesses in behalf of his suffering niece.'

In answer to this letter, Lady Ellincourt received the following from her daughter:—

' The object of your solicitude, my dearest mother, is no longer an inhabitant of this cruel world! Lady Ballafyn had been dead a fortnight when your letter reached me. I wonder you have not seen it announced in the English papers.

' Innumerable reports are spread about here, concerning this event. Many people assert that her ladyship met an untimely death, by poison, administered to her by her cruel lord. Of this number Mrs. Flyu, my maid, is the most devout believer, for she has seen people there who have seen Lady Ballafyn's ghost all in white upon the crag of the rock, where her lover appeared some time ago. ' And what, my lady, could take her ladyship's ghost there, you know, if she had come fairly by her death? ' This is Flyu's creed, and the whole bench of bishops could not turn her from it, where they to try.

' Other people assert that Lady B. has made her escape to England, and that it was only a log of wood that was so pompously interred, a few days ago; and that my lord's reason for choosing





PENMONT ABBEY The Place of Penny's Native
and the residence of the author

to believe her dead, is because he intends marrying the woman he has kept so long, and make her as good as a great many more ladies who wear coronets, and came by them in the same manner. But for my part I must confess that I am a convert to neither opinion; for I think it extremely natural that a person of a delicate frame, like Lady Ballafyn, should sink under the pressure of ill-treatment and confinement, particularly as she had not one sympathizing bosom to whom she could impart her sorrows.—I only wonder she has lived so long.

'I hope my dear mother's excellent sense will suggest the best consolation to her. The death of Lady Ballafyn is the emancipation of a wretched slave, and ought to be hailed with joy instead of lamentation.

'That she was innocent I don't entertain a doubt; and in that case what an exchange is her's, sinking as she was beneath accumulated sorrow and distress, both of body and mind! She is now translated to the fulness of glory and happiness for evermore.

Lady Ellincourt's mind was relieved from the tortures of suspense and anxiety, by the mournful news conveyed to her in her daughter's letter; and her agitated feelings gradually sunk into the calm of settled melancholy. The last vestige of her beloved brother was now extinct, and his name for ever blotted out. The sweet offspring of that unhappy marriage had terminated her youthful career in a manner no less wretched than her parents had done before her; but she could now suffer no more, and fear subsided with hope, in the heart of Lady Ellincourt.

Lord Ellincourt beheld, with real concern, the havoc grief was making on the delicate frame of his indulgent mother, and he used his utmost endeavour to divert her melancholy. The society of the engaging Fanny seemed to promise the best antidote to the gloom that was creeping over her. Lord Ellincourt entreated his mother therefore to take the child from school; and by making her the constant inmate of the house, insure to herself the comfort of a companion, whose intrusions on her privacy would be optional.

Lady Ellincourt approved of the scheme, and Fanny was installed in her new abode before another week had elapsed; to the almost uncontrollable joy of the lively girl, who thought she could never sufficiently express her gratitude to her *dear—dear mamma*, as she

now styled Lady Ellincourt, for a favour as delightful as unlooked for. That Fanny might be no loser by the removal, Lady Ellincourt determined to engage an accomplished governess to complete the education of her darling under her roof.

Miss Bridewell, who just at that period was wishing to get rid of her dear Dawson, recommended that lady as the fittest person she knew to fill up the important station.

Lady Ellincourt approved the measure, and Mrs. Dawson became the *gouvernante* of *Fatherless Fanny*; assuming as much importance upon the occasion, as if she had been appointed to the tuition of the first princess in the known world.

It is necessary in this place to mention, that soon after the Lady Trenthams left school, the amiable Lady Maria became the wife of the *far from amiable* Col. Ross, whose pleasing exterior had beguiled her of her heart, before she was aware that she had one; and whose large fortune and high family rendered him agreeable to the Marquis of Petersfield as a son-in-law, particularly as there appeared to be a fair chance of the family title and estate of Ballafyn centering in that gentleman, as his brother had been married many years without having an heir; and the rumours that had reached the marquis respecting Lady Ballafyn's supposed infidelity, rendered it probable his lordship would never marry again.

During the ensuing five years of Fanny's life, little occurred to vary the scene. She was the cherished companion of her kind benefactress, and the still undiminished favourite of Lord Ellincourt; who, though he continued his giddy career through the mazes of fashion, never abated aught of his kindness towards his adopted child.

Mrs. Dawson, had now completed the education of her pupil, and the recommendation of Lady Ellincourt obtained for that lady a similar situation in the family of a lady who resided a part of the year in Ireland.

Mrs. Dawson, it has before been observed, was of a disposition exactly calculated to make her way in the world. She well knew how to catch the whim of the moment, and to humour it with the most consummate skill.

She was always, therefore, a great favourite with her employers. Lady Ellincourt, who was one of the best women in the world,

thought Mrs. Dawson the epitome of perfection, for to her observation she had appeared as pious as she was accomplished, and in the latter point there was no deception. Mrs. Dawson was certainly full capable of the task she had undertaken, as far as elegant attainments extended; but poor Fanny would have imbibed but little of the true spirit of piety from her governess, had it not been for the genuine lessons bestowed upon her by her affectionate friend, Lady Ellincourt; and the firm foundation that had been laid by the amiable Emily Barlowe, during the infant years of the interesting orphan.

Mrs. Dawson had found the secret, however, of winning Fanny's affection, whose artless bosom, as incapable of suspicion as of deceit, judged every body of the pure model of her own heart. Every secret of her soul had been reposed in Mrs. Dawson's keeping, and she had not a thought she wished to conceal from the person she had so long considered in the light of a second self. To part with this tenderly beloved friend was, therefore, a most painful trial for the affectionate girl; and Mrs. Dawson took care the impression should not be softened by any of the attentions Lady Ellincourt bestowed upon her favourite, by way of amusing her thoughts, and diverting them from the object of her regret.

Fanny's grief, which had been continually increased by the artful suggestions of Mrs. Dawson, appeared beyond the control of reason when the final separation took place, and to mitigate its violence Lady Ellincourt consented to an arrangement which had not her entire approbation, namely, the establishing of a regular correspondence between the pupil and her *ci-devant* governess, when at a distance from each other.

This was exactly the object Mrs. Dawson had in view all the time, and the attainment of her wishes promised to gratify the two ruling passions of her mind, curiosity and selfish policy. She well knew that by Fanny's letters she could obtain the knowledge of every material occurrence in Lady Ellincourt's family; and, over and above the satisfaction of acquiring that knowledge to her naturally curious mind, she might be able, through her skill in manœuvring, to turn some of them to her own advantage. Things being thus arranged in her own mind, Mrs. Dawson took her leave, with every exterior appearance of the deepest regret, although her

heart secretly rejoiced at the change, as her salary was considerably augmented by the event; and she went away laden with marks of Lady Ellincourt's munificence, besides all the valuable trinkets she had obtained from the simple Fanny, by 'loving' them for the sake of the 'dear—dear wearer.'

CHAPTER VII.

*The Separation.*

LORD ELLINCOURT's attachment to Emily Barlowe, although it had never yielded to any new attraction, had not been sufficiently strong to induce his lordship to follow the amiable girl to Jamaica, as he had once talked of doing.

At length, however, an incident occurred that re-united them in the most unexpected manner possible.

Lady Eliincourt's health had been visibly declining for some time, and her physicians, after trying every remedy this country afforded, recommended the mild climate of Lisbon as the *dernier resort*. Lady Ellincourt received the *fiat* with real regret, as she was an enthusiastic lover of Old England; but the united entreaties of her son, and the affectionate Fanny, at length overcame her objection, and she promised to acquiesce with the doctor's injunctions, provided her dear Edmund would accompany her.

This was precisely what her dear Edmund had always intended to do, and he assured his mother that nothing would give him greater pain than to be denied the pleasure of administering to her comfort and her safety during her exportation. And so said her tenderly-attached Fanny, when Lady Ellincourt asked her whether she would prefer being left at Miss Bridewell's, or Lady Maria Ross's, during the forced absence of her maternal friend. 'Surely my dear—dear mamma would not be so cruel as to talk of leaving *me* in England, when ill-health obliges her to seek a distant home.'

In pity to my agonized feelings, do not pronounce so hard a sentence upon a heart which acknowledges no mother but you— which forms no wish so ardent as that of being able to show the gratitude and affection that glows in it for you, my kind, my beloved benefactress.'

As Fanny pronounced these words she clasped her arms round Lady Ellincourt's neck, and endeavoured, with one of her fascinating smiles, to shake the good lady's resolution. But although deeply affected by the sweet girl's earnestness in the cause she was pleading, and fully convinced of the sincerity of her attachment, Lady Ellincourt was not to be persuaded by all the rhetoric poor Fanny was mistress of.

'I have well considered the subject we are upon, my sweet girl,' replied her ladyship, 'and I feel so thoroughly convinced of the impropriety of complying with your request, that I cannot suffer any persuasion to shake my resolution. You know me, my dear Fanny, and that selfish considerations have no weight with me. You will believe me, therefore, when I assure you that I practise great self-denial in withholding your affectionate solicitations; for I can affirm, with truth, that there is nothing I leave behind I shall so truly regret as my tender and affectionate little nurse, Fanny.

'But, my dear girl, life is uncertain even to the healthy; with invalids it seems still more precarious: and greatly would it embitter the pangs of death, could the painful reflection present itself to my mind that my Fanny was exposed, by my imprudence, to the trying situation of being left in a strange country, without a proper protector of her own sex to re-conduct her to her native country.'

'But, my dear mamma,' interrupted Fanny, 'will not Lord Ellincourt go with you? and whose protection *could* be better than his, should I indeed be deprived of my best friend?'

'Edmund would prove a kind friend and a powerful protector to my girl, I am sure,' answered Lady Ellincourt; 'but so young a man is not a *proper chaperon* for her, and that must be studied, my sweet girl. Maternal anxiety, such as mine, foresees and provides for every contingency. Be reconciled therefore, my Fanny, to a determination which cannot be repealed, and which has been

made after a mature consideration, and from the very best of motives.'

It was in vain that Lady Ellincourt preached patience and submission to Fanny; no argument could convince her that it was right to separate her from her beloved mamma, and she wept incessantly at the *flat* she could not alter. When urged by Lady Ellincourt to decide upon her choice of residence during her absence, she would reply, 'It matters not where I go; all places will be alike to me, when my dear mamma is taken from me.'

At length, however, she was induced, by Lady Ellincourt's insisting upon an answer, to choose Lady Maria Ross for her protectress, in preference to Miss Bridewell. Col. Ross's intimacy with Lord Ellincourt, and Lady Maria's near relationship to the Ellincourt family, had conspired to render them the most frequent visitors Lady Ellincourt had; and as Fanny loved Lady Maria with the truest affection, from the time she first became acquainted with that lady at Miss Bridewell's, it was natural she should prefer her protection to the formal jurisdiction of her *quondam* governess. Col. Ross had never been a favourite of Fanny's, although the uniform kindness and attention with which he treated her seemed to demand her gratitude.

Since his marriage, the Colonel had affected to consider Fanny in the light of a child; a mode of behaviour which seemed to increase rather than diminish with her increasing years and stature.

Lady Ellincourt's allowance for her favourite's maintenance was extremely liberal; and both the Colonel and Lady Maria appeared pleased with the arrangement, when they learnt that Fanny was to become their guest. Not so the affectionate girl; no projected plan of pleasure could rouse her from the sorrow into which Lady Ellincourt's determination of leaving her behind had plunged her, and she was deaf to every thing that Lady Maria could say, by way of consolatory advice upon the subject.

At length the dreaded moment arrived; and Fanny was torn, more dead than alive, from the arms of her dear Lady Ellincourt, whose heroism never forsook her, and conveyed in Lady Maria's coach to that lady's house. Lady Ellincourt had wisely insisted that the parting should take place the day before her departure, as she judged herself unequal to the task of bidding her darling

farewell, when about to encounter the fatigues and bustle of a journey, which in her weak state appeared already but too formidable.

Lord Ellincourt, notwithstanding the levity natural to him, possessed an excellent heart, and the tender attachment of the artless Fanny deeply afflicted it. When he pressed her in his arms, and kissed off the tears that rolled down her blooming cheeks, he thought it was impossible he should ever love any human being as he at that moment loved Fanny.

' Dear girl,' said his lordship, ' how shall I bear to live apart from you? The sight of you is become necessary to my happiness, nay, almost to my existence; and I verily believe I shall soon find that I cannot do without you.'

Col. Ross was present when Lord Ellincourt thus expressed himself, and the heightened colour of his cheek, and the stern expression of his eye, too plainly told to the observing Lady Maria, that her husband was not pleased. Of the cause from whence his displeasure sprung she was ignorant; but she had already learned to watch the variation of his countenance, with the trembling anxiety of a dependant vassal.

Lord Ellincourt was too deeply absorbed in his own feelings to observe his friend, or he might have been tempted to join his solicitations to Fanny's, to persuade Lady Ellincourt to revoke her decree, and even at that late moment to suffer her disconsolate favourite to accompany her.

' Oh! that I were so dear to you as you say!' exclaimed the artless Fanny: ' O! that it were true, indeed, that you could not exist without seeing me. Lady Ellincourt would not then refuse to take me with her; she would compassionate the feelings of her son, although she has no pity for mine.' Unconscious of the full force of what she had said, Fanny clasped her hands together with an expression of tender anguish, whilst tears poured in abundance from her eyes, which were raised, as in supplication, to watch the countenance of her dear mamma, still cherishing the hope that she might relent.

Such a thing was, however, farther than ever from Lady Ellincourt's thoughts, as a suspicion that moment crossed her imagination, that rendered her dreaded journey a most fortunate cir-

cumstance in her estimation. Fanny's beauty had been an object so familiar to her eye, that its progressive improvement had not awakened any fears on Lord Ellincourt's account until that moment; but her eyes appeared to be suddenly opened, and the energy with which he had just expressed himself, joined to Fanny's artless wish of the realization of his love for her, seemed to strike conviction on her mind. 'They love each other,' said she, mentally, 'and my imprudence has undone them both, unless this fortunate separation should wean them from each other.'

Dear as Lady Ellincourt loved Fanny, and tenderly alive as she was to the happiness of her son, yet such was the effect of hereditary pride upon her mind, that the idea of uniting her son to a person of obscure birth, was worse to her imagination than even the prospect of his being miserable for life.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Wedding.

UNDER such impressions, the result may be anticipated. Lady Ellincourt remained firm, and Fanny inconsolable. The latter was conveyed, in a state of mind bordering on despair, to the house of Col. Ross, where the tenderest attentions were lavished upon her by the amiable Lady Maria, and every scheme of pleasure devised likely to dissipate her melancholy. In the mean time, Lady Ellincourt pursued her journey, accompanied by her son, on every turn of whose countenance she dwelt with unceasing anxiety, and endeavoured to trace in his minutest actions, and most unguarded expressions, the fatal effects of the passion she imagined he had imbibed from the too lovely object of both their affections.

What pleasure did it give this anxious mother then, when the amount of all her scrutiny proved the supposition an error, and convinced her, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that she was

mistaken in her conjecture, at least as far as related to her son. In regard to poor Fanny, she did not feel the same assurance; the excess of her grief—the artless manner in which she had expressed it—and her wish, so fervently uttered, that she were, indeed, necessary to Lord Ellincourt's happiness, continually recurred to Lady Ellincourt's mind, and filled it with sadness; for so dear was Fanny to her maternal heart, that the idea of her being doomed to suffer under the influence of a hopeless passion, gave the utmost poignant feelings of anguish to her bosom.

Arrived at Lisbon, Lady Ellincourt soon found benefit from its salubrious atmosphere, and her son had the satisfaction of seeing his mother's health improving hourly.

A few weeks after their arrival, they were agreeably surprised, one morning, by a visit from Mr. Barlowe, who informed Lord and Lady Ellincourt that he and his whole family were come to reside some months, perhaps years, at Lisbon; as their stay depended upon the life of an infirm relation, who was immensely rich, and who intended to make Mr. Barlowe her heir, had entreated him to come and reside near her, during the little time she had to stay in this world; and that, in order to comply with that request, he had brought his whole family with him, intending to go to England after the death of his relation, and fix his abode there, as his estate in Jamaica had been disposed of, previous to his quitting that island. The evident pleasure with which Lord Ellincourt listened to this recital delighted his mother, as she saw plainly in his eager, but confused inquiries after Emily Barlowe, that the interest that sweet girl had excited in her son's bosom was still undiminished in fervour.

It gave her still greater satisfaction when she learned, by a seemingly careless inquiry, that Emily was disengaged, or at least that no positive plan of a matrimonial nature had yet occupied her father in that respect to her.

The eldest daughter was on the point of marriage with a young West Indian, of immense fortune, whose attachment to her was sufficiently potent to induce him to follow her to Lisbon, whether curiosity, or perhaps coquetry, had led her, in spite of her lover's entreaties, and her father's remonstrances, who had intended to witness her nuptials before he left Jamaica.

The haughty Caroline, however, chose to enjoy the triumph of leading her captive from one quarter of the globe to the other, and her vanity was not a little inflated, when she found her influence strong enough to accomplish her wishes. The gallantry of this ardent lover devised a thousand *fêtes* for the gratification of his beloved mistress; and on these occasions Lord Ellincourt was sure to make one of the party, and by his attentions to Emily, to prove that she too had a lover no less ardent than her sister's.

To talk about Fanny, the mutual favourite, was, at first, their excuse for being so often seated near each other; but by degrees another topic, more agreeable to both, was substituted in the place of Fanny, and the result was an application to Mr. Barlowe for his permission to address his daughter; and as no reasonable objection could be started to the alliance, it was soon agreed to on both sides.

Lady Ellincourt had now the happiness of seeing her son united to the lady she most approved of, and safe from the witchery of the fascinating Fanny. Yet still the good lady heaved a sigh now and then for the poor girl, lest her youthful heart should have been touched by the influence she had dreaded for her son. The letters which her ladyship received from her favourite did not, however, give any reason to suppose her so affected; for when she replied to the one in which Lady Ellincourt had spoken of her son's intended union with Emily Barlowe, Fanny thus expressed herself—

'Thank you, dearest, dear mamma, for your charming news. Oh! what a happy girl will your Fanny be, when she sees her dear papa, and her dear Emily together, and thinks that they will never more be parted, and that she shall always live with them, and love them, and see them every day!'

These expressions certainly had not the appearance of a *hopeless attachment*; yet still Lady Ellincourt had taken the idea so strongly in her head, that, like most old ladies when they form an opinion, she did not like to give it up, and acknowledge herself in an error, even to herself.

CHAPTER IX.

A Female Rattle.

IN the mean time, Fanny, 'who never dreamt of love,' was passing her time in the full enjoyment of innocent delight. The spirits, at sixteen are very elastic; and her sorrow for the loss of her dear Lady Ellincourt's society, soon gave way to the kind attentions of the affectionate Lady Maria, who spared no pains in the friendly task of amusing her dear Fanny.

Col. Ross was no less attentive, no less kind to the unhappy girl, but far less successful in his efforts to please. It was not that Fanny felt ungrateful for his kindness, but that she experienced sensations of repugnance, she could not account for, whenever he addressed himself to her, particularly when they happened to be alone; for then there was a fervour in his manner, a look in his eyes, as disagreeable as it was new to her; and which, though it roused her resentment, she dared not to complain of, as she knew not why she felt offended, although the emotions of anger were irresistible.

Col. Ross had penetration enough to see that he was no favourite with Fanny, and this he attributed to a prepossession in favour of Lord Ellincourt, rather than any deficiency in his own powers of pleasing: and the same vanity suggested the probability of gaining upon the unsuspecting heart of his intended victim, and supplanting the image of Lord Ellincourt, which he supposed was cherished there with all the fervour of a first love. Amongst the friends to whom Fanny was now introduced by her new protectors, was a young lady of immense fortune, of the name of Stanhope, who was, like most other heiresses, a spoiled girl in the fullest sense of the word.

Accustomed from her infancy to have her will the law of all about her, she had reached the age of eighteen, without having been once contradicted. Miss Stanhope was, therefore, the epi-

tome of caprice, and fashionable folly ; yet was she naturally of a generous disposition, and perfectly good tempered. This young lady had hitherto resided with her grandmother, whose doating affection had been the cause of her follies.

This lady was lately dead, and the care of Miss Stanhope's person and fortune had devolved upon the Marquis of Petersfield, whose ward she was, and at whose house she was to reside, until her marriage, which was expected to take place in a few months.

This alliance had been projected by the parents of the young people, during their infancy, and was considered a most advantageous *union of property* for both parties. The young nobleman intended for Miss Stanhope's husband was the Duke of Albemarle, who was about four years older than herself, and also an orphan, and only child.

The young duke had been abroad some years, on account of the delicate state of his health, for which the climate of Sicily had been recommended by his physicians. He was now on the point of returning to his native country, in order to fulfil his father's will, by marrying Miss Stanhope.

Lady Ellincourt had been absent several months, at the time of Fanny's introduction to Miss Stanhope, and it was declared absolutely necessary for the perfect re-establishment of her health, that her ladyship should remain in Portugal some months longer, a circumstance which gave the utmost alarm to poor Fanny, whose terrified imagination was continually presenting to her the dangers of her benefactress's protracted stay, in a country so formidably threatened by the rapacious invader.

Miss Stanhope laughed at her fears, ' My dear girl,' said that wild young lady, ' I perceive you are as fond of Lady Ellincourt as I was of my poor grandmamma ; and if you live with her much longer you will be just such a fool as *I am* ; so I think it will be an excellent thing if the French should run away with her, and not let her come home any more.'

' Lady Ellincourt is certainly very indulgent to me,' replied Fanny, ' but she never spoiled me.'

' There's a conceited puss,' interrupted Miss Stanhope ; ' she wishes people to think that she can bear indulgence better than I can, and that all the old women in the world cannot *spoil her*.

'Well child,' added she, laughing, 'since you are *indulgence proof*, by your own confession, you must promise to spend the honeymoon with the poor duke and me, when we are married, for we shall be vapoured to death, depend upon it, until we get used to each other's ways.'

'You seem to have formed a strange idea of conjugal felicity, Miss Stanhope,' replied Fanny, 'to talk of being vapoured to death in the society of your husband, so soon after your marriage.'

'Formal creature!' rejoined the mad-cap, 'I'll venture to lay a wager, when thou art married, thou wilt trot about, arm in arm, with thy lord and master, like Darby and Joan, and talk about the supreme felicity of *unlimited confidence and congenial spirits*.'

'I hope,' said Fanny, smiling, 'if ever I *do* marry, 'I shall be able to realize your charming picture, or else I would rather live single.'

'Live single, my dear!' interrupted Miss Stanhope, 'why that is the extent of human felicity, in my idea of happiness. I would give half my fortune this minute to be allowed to live single; at least until I could find somebody amiable enough to make me change my mind.'

'Is not the duke amiable?' asked Fanny.

'I really cannot tell,' replied Miss Stanhope; 'I have never seen him since he was an Eton boy, and then the *animal* was well enough to look at; but I always hated him because I knew I should be obliged to marry him.'

'But who can oblige you to marry his *Grace*?' said Fanny, 'against your inclination? You have no parents alive, and surely your guardian's power cannot extend to such violence.'

'You are a little simpleton,' answered Miss Stanhope, 'and know nothing about the world and its ways, I can see that; so I must teach you. It is but too often seen that frail mortals are apt to repine at the unequal distribution of the good things of this life. This is a most silly calculation: the possessions of the wealthy have always their concomitant miseries, supplied either by the pride, avarice, or ambition of their relatives. The wise junto of fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts, that made up this wise match for the poor Duke of Albemarle and me, took infinite pains to strike the balance between those that envied *his* title and *my* riches,

and the then unconscious possessors of the baubles, by dooming us both to be tied together, whether we liked it or not. Whichever refuses to fulfil the compact, forfeits the bulk of their fortune to the other, and is to suffer the punishment of poverty and repentance all the remainder of their life for the delinquency. Now, though I would give *half* my fortune to be off the wedding, I should not like to lose the *whole*, and therefore I must submit to be *noosed*. The duke, I dare say, is of the same mind; but I suppose, though he might *prefer* my fortune *without* myself, to the taking it with all the incumbrances, yet he would not like to give me his largest estate to be off the bargain. Thus you see are two people going to be tied together to please their dead papas and mammas, who wish each other at the Antipodes.'

Whilst Fanny listened to Miss Stanhope's wild description of her embarrassing situation, the smile of gaiety forsook her lip, and tears trembled in her eyes. 'Merciful heavens!' thought she, 'how inscrutable are thy ways! The rich heiress of incalculable wealth is an object of pity to the pennyless orphan, whose daily maintenance depends upon the bounty of a stranger!'

'Moralizing, I wager,' said Miss Stanhope, looking earnestly in Fanny's face; 'yes, yes, I see it in that twinkling eye, and carefraught brow. I dare say my little nun would renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and run into a cloister, or any where, rather than marry a man she did not like. Oh! I can see a very eloquent exordium ready to escape the ruby boundaries of that pretty little mouth, which, I dare say, would be very edifying to any little miss or master that would twirl their thumbs, and listen to it: but keep it in, my dear, for it will be lost upon me. I can neither moralize nor sermonize, nor listen to those who do. I am a predestinarian; what *must* be, *will* be; so if I am to have the duke, I *shall* have him; if I am not to have him, some Giant, or Genii, or *young Lochinvar*, will come just in time to carry me off at the last moment, and then *you* shall write me word whether the bridegroom behaved like the poor fool in *Marmion*, or whether he took another wife, as he ought to do.'

'Oh *I* will have nothing to do with your wedding,' replied Fanny, 'nor your bridegroom either; for you talk so shockingly upon the subject that you frighten me, I assure you.'

'Did you never hear, my dear,' said Miss Stanhope, 'of boys making a great noise to drown their own fears, when obliged to go through a church-yard at night. Such is my case at this moment; I rove and talk nonsense to banish unpleasant thoughts that crowd upon me; were I to suffer my spirits to flag, I should find it impossible to raise them again, so—'

'Away with melancholy!'

And the lively girl left the room singing that popular air, with no small portion of Catalani's sweetness and vivacity.

Fanny's artless sweetness, and the gaiety resulting from innocence, that so particularly characterized her, rendered her a great favourite with Miss Stanhope. Her vivacity was congenial to her own, but far more equal in its tenor. Unaccustomed to control, the slightest contradiction, the most trifling disappointment, had the power to discompose Amelia Stanhope, and put her into the '*pouts*,' as she herself styled her fits of ill-humour; and whenever the demon of ill-temper spread his malign influence, Fanny was the only person who could effectually dispel the cloud that obscured her countenance, and restore the capricious girl to her smiles again. Miss Stanhope became, therefore, the inseparable companion of Fanny; and as Lady Maria Ross positively refused to let her charge become a guest at the Marquis of Petersfield's, as Miss Stanhope was continually teasing her to be, that young lady passed nearly the whole of her time with her new friend, at Lady Maria's house in Grosvenor Street.

Miss Stanhope was very fond of riding on horseback, and so eager was she for her favourite to partake of the amusement, that she presented her with one of the most beautiful horses that she could purchase, at which Fanny was not a little delighted, as she was as partial to the exercise as her lively friend, and had learned to be a tolerably expert horsewoman, during her summer visits to Ellincourt's country seat.

Miss Stanhope had a carriage appropriated for her own use, and this conveyed the young friends out of town, where the horses, attended by two grooms, in Miss Stanhope's livery, waited their pleasure.

These rides formed the most delightful part of Fanny's life, for

she was far from having any predilection in favour of nocturnal amusements; and although Miss Stanhope insisted upon her accompanying her wherever she *could* go, yet she would often have preferred the quiet retirement of her own chamber, to the brilliant ball-room, thronged opera, or motley masquerade.

Some of Lady Maria's Ross's friends made a point of inviting Fanny to their entertainments, particularly when they perceived what a great favourite she was with the rich and celebrated Miss Stanhope; but a great number declined showing her that favour, from the aristocratical fear of making acquaintance with some obscure person, whom *nobody* knew.

Fanny's story, as far as Lady Ellincourt was acquainted with it, was generally known, as the hope of tracing Fanny's family, by detailing the adventures, had induced that good lady to talk more of them than she would otherwise have done. Her ladyship had strictly adhered to the request made in the letter addressed to Miss Bridewell, by the person who put Fanny under that lady's care; namely—not to add any name to the simple appellation of Fanny, by which only she had hitherto been distinguished.

These precautions, without having the desired effect, had exposed the sweet girl to the malevolent remarks of the envious and the unfeeling; and often had she experienced the mortification of hearing the inquiry of a stranger, respecting her name, answered by some ill-natured insinuation, from those whose envy had been excited by the eulogium that preceded the question.

One evening, in particular, a gentleman, whose attention had been long fixed upon Fanny, asked a lady who was sitting next him, if she could inform him who that beautiful girl was. 'I never beheld such a lovely creature,' added he, in a tone of rapturous admiration.

'The girl is a perfect mystery,' replied the ill-natured fair one; 'I don't believe any body knows who she is, unless, indeed, it is the Ellincourts. Some people suppose she is Lord Ellincourt's daughter, but for my part I think it much more likely she is his mistress; and I am astonished that any body will admit such an unaccountable person to their parties. She has no name but that of Fanny, and she is generally called, by way of distinction, Fanny *nameless!* But I think it is past a joke to be obliged to sit in the

same room with a person of such doubtful *origin*, and, indeed, for what we can tell, of such doubtful *character*.'

'I do not wonder,' answered the gentleman, drily, 'that any lady should object to sitting in the same room with that lovely creature, who is not proof against the envy natural to her sex; for however dubious her *origin* may be, her claims to admiration are undoubted, and that is what few women will excuse in her.'

Fanny had heard all that passed, for she was placed so near it was impossible to avoid it; and her confusion may be imagined. When she was talking to Miss Stanhope the next day, she mentioned the distress she had suffered, adding, 'that she preferred staying at home to the being exposed to such cruel remarks.'

'My dear creature,' replied Miss Stanhope, 'all this arises from that fiddle faddle Lady Ellincourt permitting your story to be exposed, and persisting in calling you by the name of Fanny only. Tell me candidly, is not such a proceeding calculated to raise the curiosity of the quietest creatures in the world, and to set the giant Observation staring at you, wherever you go? Now, if Lady Ellincourt, with her old-fashioned ideas, as stiff and as formal as Queen Elizabeth's ruff, chooses to behave so ridiculously, surely Lady Maria Ross might have had more sense; she might have given you some fine sounding surname, and trumped up a probable story about you, that would have quieted all the he and she gossips that visit her, and then every thing would have gone on smoothly. But never mind, I have a scheme in my head, and will put it in execution the first opportunity; and depend upon it, it will answer.'

'What is that, dear Amelia?' said Fanny, anxiously.

'Oh! never mind,' replied Miss Stanhope, 'you shall know nothing about it, until my plot is ripe. The beauty of a novel consists in well-managed surprises, and I am determined mine shall be a first-rate performance. Do you know Lord Somertown?'

'No,' replied Fanny; 'I have heard his lordship's name, but I never saw him.'

'Oh! then you have a great pleasure to come,' said Miss Stanhope; 'he is the greatest quiz in nature, and I hate him abominably. He is the Duke of Albemarle's uncle and guardian. There is nothing in the world would please me so well as to see the

wretch stand in the pillory, but I am afraid I shall never attain to such a good fortune. However, if I can but succeed in plaguing him, I declare I shall be the happiest girl in Christendom.'

'I hope, if you are going to play any tricks with Lord Somertown,' said Fanny, looking grave, 'that, my dear Amelia, you will not bring me into the scrape; for, you know, what would be tolerated in you would be deemed unpardonable in me.'

'Oh! don't frighten yourself,' replied Miss Stanhope; 'you shall have no hand in the plot, though the heroine of the piece.'

'How, the heroine? Dear Amelia, you frighten me,' said Fanny, looking alarmed.

'Nay, never look so terrified,' replied her lively friend; 'I don't intend you to *marry* Lord Somertown, although that would be an excellent method of plaguing him, if you had *my* spirit. I would be bound to break his heart in three months; but you are too gentle, and too good for such a task, so I don't think of that scheme. No, no! he *must* be tormented, and I think I know how. They say he broke his niece's heart by his cruel usage, and if I can find the way to *his*, I will remunerate him as he deserves.'

'I dare say there is not a spot bigger than half a split pea, in his whole heart, that is vulnerable to the sense of feeling; and my skill must be exerted to find it out, and transfix it with the shaft of remorse.'

'Do what you please to *Lord Somertown*,' said Fanny, 'but for heaven's sake spare *me*; for I feel the most unaccountable dread of being implicated in the hoax, be it what it may.'

'You are a silly child,' answered Miss Stanhope, laughing; 'and your *unaccountable* dreads must not spoil the getting up of my play.'

'Don't make it a *Tragedy*,' said Fanny, emphatically.

'No, my dear, it is to be a *Melo-Drama*, suited to the taste of the times—something between an *Opera* and a *Puppet-Show*; with a great deal of *pantomimic gestures*, *operatic pathos*, and fashionable *want of common sense*.'

CHAPTER X.

An Adventure.

FANNY had always been accustomed to early rising from her infancy, and therefore, unless she went to bed very late indeed, she always, in fine weather, took a walk before breakfast.

As Lady Maria Ross was a *dormouse* she knew nothing of this indulgence, or she would not have suffered a girl of such extraordinary beauty as Fanny to go strolling in the Park of a morning, accompanied only by her maid, who was very little older than herself, and far less fit to be trusted. The grove in the Deer Park was Fanny's favourite stroll; and one beautiful morning in May, having taken a longer round than usual, she determined to rest herself beneath the shade of one of the large trees in that beautiful spot.

Her maid, Betty, had seated herself near her mistress, on the grass, and was expatiating, in her simple dialect, on the preference that ought to be given to a walk, such as they had had, to the unwholesome custom of lying in bed, in a close room, until 'the sun was ready to *burn their noses*,' to use an expression of her own.

'Well the ladies may want to wear such a heap of red powder on their cheeks, Miss Fanny,' continued the girl, 'for sure enough they stew themselves so, they must be, for all the world, like a boiled turnip, until they have daubed themselves over with paint! Well, Miss, you take the right method to look ruddy and wholesome, and that's what makes people call you so deadly pretty. Yes, and look there stands a gentleman as thinks so, I am sure; for he looks for all the world as if he was planet-struck, as my grandmother used to call it. Do, dear Miss Fanny, just look at him; it will do your heart good to see what a fool he looks like.'

Fanny turned mechanically to look at the object Betty had pointed out to her. At a little distance from the spot where she

was sitting, she beheld a tall gentleman habited in black, of the most elegant form, whose countenance wore the interesting cast of settled melancholy. His large dark eyes were fixed upon Fanny, with a look of inquiry, in which sorrow seemed blended with curiosity. So absorbed too was he in the contemplation, that he attempted not to withdraw his eyes, when Fanny turned to observe him. Confused at the scrutinizing glances of the stranger, Fanny arose to depart, without making any answer to Betty's animadversions.

'There, Miss,' said the girl, in a discontented tone, 'now you must go and stew yourself up at home, instead of taking the fresh air, as you ought to do; and all along with that saucy jackanapes staring at you so. Well, I wish I was a man, I would soon teach him better manners.'

Fanny walked on in silence, and with a hurried step, whilst Betty followed her reluctantly, and continually turning her head to observe the stranger; at length she exclaimed, 'Well, to be sure, if that dismal looking man is not following us, I wish I may never be married.'

'Betty,' replied Fanny, in an angry tone, 'you behave so ridiculously, that it is no wonder you excite the notice of every body that passes.'

'Dear me, Miss Fanny, don't go to lay the blame upon me, for you know very well the gentleman is looking at you; so that, I dare say, he does not know I am here, no more than nothing at all.'

Betty talked so loud, and stared about her so, that she verified Fanny's accusation of attracting the notice of every body that passed her. A gentleman on horseback had been observing her some time, and when he drew quite near he jumped off his horse, and giving it to his groom, he came up to the terrified Fanny, and placing himself familiarly by her side, 'For heaven's sake, my sweet girl,' said he, attempting to take her hand, 'where did you pick up that strange monster for an attendant? I am sure you might get a good price for her at Exeter Change, to be shown amongst the wild beasts. Do you take her out with you to serve as a foil to your beauty?'

Fanny made no reply to this unmeaning jargon. But Betty felt herself so exasperated at the mention of being shown amongst the

wild beasts, that she could not contain her spleen; and she said, in an angry tone of voice, 'that *some people* that found fault with *some people* was a deal more *properer* to be sent amongst the wild beasts, than those they sneered at; and I wish,' added she, tossing her head disdainfully, 'that those that be dressed like gentlemen behaved like gentlemen, and not go about affronting young ladies that are walking quietly along.' The idea of ranking herself with the lady never entered poor Betty's head, but the gentleman understood her that she meant to be included amongst the *young ladies* she had mentioned, and he burst into an immoderate fit of laughter; and throwing his arm familiarly round Fanny's waist, he expressed his hopes that *she* was not affronted with him, and as to the other *young lady* he did not care about *her*.

Distressed and terrified beyond expression, Fanny struggled to get from her persecutor, who seemed equally diverted by *her* terror, and her attendant's angry remonstrances. As it was early in the morning, but few people were in the park; and the gentleman who had assailed Fanny, feeling no fear of a rescue, amused himself by seeming to let her escape, and then catching her again, until her exhausted spirits gave way, and she burst into tears.

At that moment the stranger, whose observation of Fanny had first excited Betty's loud exclamations, advanced to the assistance of the distressed girl, and waving his hand with an air of dignity that immediately awed the rude object of his resentment, 'Desist, Sir,' said he, in a tone of authority; 'that young lady shall not be insulted whilst I can protect her.'

'And pray, Sir,' said the brute, 'who are you?'

'A man,' replied the majestic stranger; 'and that is a title you can lay no claim to, whilst you debase yourself so low as to insult a defenceless woman!'

Ashamed of the part he had acted, and yet unwilling to acknowledge his error, the gentleman appeared inclined to resent the interference of Fanny's protector, and muttered something about satisfaction. But with a dignity truly irresistible, the interesting stranger again waved his hand; 'Begone!' said he, 'and talk not of having sustained any degradation from me, since it is impossible, by the utmost exertion of malice, to place you in a more despicable light than that in which I first beheld you.'

Then turning to Fauny, 'Rely safely on my protection, sweet girl,' said he, 'and rest assured, that I would sooner forfeit my life than suffer you to be insulted.' Confused beyond the power of expression, Fanny could only courtesy in silence to her deliverer, and pursue her way towards home, with a quickened step, in which agitation and alarm were still visible. Her persecutor, however, had quitted the Park, and mounting his horse, was out of sight in a minute. As he turned away from her, however, he said, in an insulting tone, 'He hoped that, as she had found somebody more to her mind, she would act conformably to her own *real* character, and not give herself airs that did not belong to her.'

'My dear young lady,' said the benevolent stranger who had just rescued Fanny, 'I feel persuaded that you are as innocent as you look; but I entreat you, in future, not to walk out without some attendant more proper to protect you than the one you have now got. This town and its ways, I can perceive, are new to you; and you are therefore more liable to encounter such treatment as that you have just escaped from; and, believe me, you may not always be so fortunate as you have now been. My sex are in general the staunch supporters of each other, and but too much inclined to join in oppressing, rather than in protecting those whose guardians they are by the laws of nature and humanity. The strong resemblance you bear to a dear departed friend of mine first attracted my notice; and as I gazed upon your features, a train of melancholy recollections crowded upon my mind, and I mechanically, and without design, followed your footsteps. I am most happy that I did so, as it gave me an opportunity of being of service to you.'

Fanny thanked her deliverer in terms of grateful respect, and assured him that in future she would never venture to walk out unprotected.

They had now reached the confines of the Park; and as they were preparing to cross the road into Park-lane, Col. Ross overtook them on horseback. He immediately dismounted, and giving his horse in charge to his groom, joined the party, with astonishment painted in his countenance.

Fanny, who saw that he expected an explanation, briefly related

the circumstances of the insults she had received, and acknowledged the kind interference of the benevolent stranger. When Col. Ross had listened to the recital, he thanked the stranger for his timely assistance to his young ward, adding, in a tone that showed he did not wish to cultivate the acquaintance, 'The young lady being now under the immediate protection of her guardian, your walk, sir, need not be any farther interrupted.' And then, with a stiff bow, he wished the gentleman a good morning.

The bow was returned with equal stiffness; and measuring the Colonel with a penetrating glance, the stranger said to Fanny, ' Farewell, sweet girl; may Heaven protect and keep you from the sly design of the wicked, as well as the open attacks of the licentious. Remember the advice of a friend, *trust no man*; for as the poet says, too truly—

' Women, like princes, find few *real* friends.'

Then waving his hand in the same dignified manner he had done before, and which seemed peculiar to himself, the stranger turned round and left them, pointing his footsteps towards the place he had left. As soon as Fanny reached Grosvenor Street, she retired to her chamber, where she was long before she could recover her wonted serenity.

Her terror, indeed, had subsided, but the recollection of the interesting stranger affected her in a manner she could not account for.

Every look of his beautiful countenance, every word he had uttered, seemed indelibly engraved upon her memory, and she dwelt with a mixture of pain and pleasure upon the most interesting image her fancy had ever yet contemplated.

The ungrateful manner in which Col. Ross had treated her deliverer pained her to reflect upon, and she felt surprised that a man of the Colonel's refined breeding should have shown himself so wanting in common civility, on an occasion which certainly did not warrant such an infringement on the laws of politeness. Fanny little imagined that jealousy had actuated the Colonel's behaviour, whose suspicious eye had beheld in the stranger a more formidable rival than Lord Ellincourt himself.

It was true, that he appeared to be past the first bloom of

youth, but it was impossible to behold him, and not confess that he had a most graceful form, and a most beautiful countenance. The soft melancholy that shaded his fine features, excited so powerful an interest in the hearts of his beholders, that it was not easy to forget, after once seeing him.

At breakfast, Fanny related the adventures of the morning, and received a lecture from Lady Maria, for her imprudence in walking out so far without any companion but a silly country girl, more likely by her awkwardness and folly to excite, than repel impertinence.

In this reprimand Col. Ross joined with some severity, at the same time reproaching his lady with her carelessness and want of vigilance, in permitting a young lady, who was under her protection, to be so much her own mistress as to be able to go out every morning without her knowledge.

‘I don’t know,’ added the Colonel, ‘what may be the consequence of Fanny’s adventure; the man who delivered her from her first persecutor being, in my opinion, the most dangerous of the two!’

‘Why do you think so, sir?’ asked Fanny, blushing deeply as she spoke.

‘Because,’ replied the Colonel, ‘I believe him to be a notorious fellow that I remember seeing tried for a swindler, some years ago; and, if my conjecture is right, he will no doubt endeavour to make something out of this adventure.’

‘Oh, dear!’ said Lady Maria, ‘I am frightened to death. We shall be robbed, I dare say. Indeed, Fanny, you must be very careful; and above all things never speak to that man, if you should happen to see him, let his appearance be ever so prepossessing, or the company you see him in ever so respectable. Swindlers have the art of introducing themselves every where; indeed you cannot be too much upon your guard.’

This was the very distrust Col. Ross had wished to inspire, and he was happy to see his artifice had produced the desired effect upon his lady, as he well knew she would effectually prevent the approach of the stranger, of whose future attempts to obtain the confidence of Fanny he was really apprehensive, but from a motive very different to the one he had assigned.

Fanny did not feel herself at all inclined to give credit to Col. Ross's insinuations against her deliverer, and she told him that she thought it illiberal to asperse the character of a man he did not know, upon no better foundation than the slight recollection of a face that might resemble the stranger's, without the least proof, in his power, of his being the unworthy person he represented him. 'For my part,' added the ingenuous girl, 'I must confess, nothing short of conviction should induce me to think unworthily of that gentleman. His manner was so gentle, yet firm and manly, that it at once excited my esteem and respect. The expression of his eyes, too, spoke the goodness of his heart, and there was a something in the tone of his voice that seemed persuasion itself.'

'At *seventeen*,' replied Col. Ross, 'such a superficial way of judging people may be excused; but believe me, Fanny, when I tell you as a friend, that it would be very dangerous for you to rely upon so erroneous a guide, in choosing your acquaintance. The sound of a man's voice may be very pleasing, and the expression of his eyes well calculated to ensnare the hearts of young girls like you, without his possessing one *virtue* to entitle him to your esteem.'

Fanny was silenced, without being convinced, and the conversation was here interrupted by the arrival of Miss Stanhope, who came to ask Fanny to ride out with her.

'If Fanny is prudent she will refuse your request,' said Col. Ross; 'she has made one excursion too many this morning.'

'How so?' asked Amelia.

The colonel then told the story in his own way, whilst Fanny, out of all patience at the account he gave of her kind deliverer, took up the subject, and drew a picture of her new acquaintance that delighted Miss Stanhope. 'Oh,' said that giddy girl, 'I am dying to see your swain, Fanny. I love pensive countenances beyond description. I hope you are not far gone in the *tender passion*, for you may depend upon it I shall become your rival, provided your delineation be a faithful one.'

'It will be an honourable rivalry to be sure,' said Col. Ross, with a sneer; 'a competition who shall accompany the hero on his voyage to Botany Bay, for there his career will end, depend upon it. He is a swindler, or I am a dunce!'

‘I should think the *latter* assertion far more likely to be true than the *former*,’ said Miss Stanhope, laughing. ‘Fanny’s account of the charming creature convinces me he is some *incognito* of consequence; and the glory of developing his real character will, perhaps, be mine. Thank you, my dear girl, for giving me something to do, that will protect me from the demon *Ennui*. The delightful task of finding out who this stranger is will amuse me for this month to come. But mind, you must look out for him, and show him to me.’

‘You are likely to have better employment, Miss Stanhope,’ said the colonel; ‘employment that will effectually defeat the attacks of that foe to the happiness of the idle and the vain, which you have just mentioned.’

‘And pray, sir, to what employment do you allude?’ asked Amelia.

‘The Duke of Albemarle is expected in town to-day; and it will be hard if the preparations for your nuptials cannot supersede the idle curiosity this silly story has excited.’

‘A pretty remedy for *ennui*, upon my honour,’ said Miss Stanhope. ‘I am sure the very thoughts of my nuptials, as you call them, give me the vapours in an instant. Married, indeed! I am sure, if the duke is as much averse to the match as I am, our union will make an excellent subject for a tragedy, and may be called—‘The double Sacrifice.’

‘Oh the perverseness of human nature!’ exclaimed Lady Maria: ‘how many girls would be glad to change places with you. The duke is a very handsome man, I understand, and very amiable. His title is ancient, and his fortune equal to your own.’

‘The two last considerations are the iron links that unite our destiny,’ said Miss Stanhope; ‘all the rest is of no consequence. But I’ll tell you what, my dear friend, there is nobody that can judge so well of the fitting of the shoe as the person that wears it. The world may think mine a *bullion* lot, but it must not be very angry with me for dissenting from its opinion. I would give half my fortune, and *all* the honour of being a dutchess, for the delightful privilege of choosing for myself.’

Fanny sighed deeply, and then blushing, because Col. Ross looked at her as if he wished to penetrate her thoughts, she rose from

the table, and walked to the window. 'Nay, don't sigh about it,' said Miss Stanhope, 'perhaps I might not choose your swain if I were to see him; and if I should, I would give you the duke in his stead, and you hear what a fine bargain his grace is!'

'You are a mad creature, Amelia,' said Lady Maria; 'but I would advise you to see the duke before you give him away, for you confess you do not know whether you like him or not.'

'That is the only thing I *do* know,' replied Miss Stanhope. 'I am sure I do not like him, and I am sure I never shall like him; and all I have to wish is, that he may not like me; for *he* has the power of declining the alliance by the trifling sacrifice of ten thousand per annum, but poor I must lose all my fortune, if I rebel. But enough of this hateful subject; you have given me the horrors: so if you do not let Fanny ride with me this morning, to drive them away, I will never forgive you.'

'If Fanny rides with you, I must make one of the party,' said Col. Ross, 'lest she should meet with either of those *impertinent fellows* she saw this morning.'

'By all means,' said Miss Stanhope, 'we shall have no objection to a beau. Will you go, Lady Maria?'

'Oh, no,' hastily answered Col. Ross, 'Maria is such a timid rider, I beg we may not have the *bore* of her company!'

'I did not intend to intrude upon you,' said Lady Maria, suppressing the tears that rose in her eyes, and endeavouring to speak in a gay tone: 'but I remember the time when you used to be delighted if I would *descend* to allow you to *instruct* me in the art of the *manege*.'

'My dear Maria, you talk of things that happened a hundred years ago,' said the colonel.

'I can only wish then,' replied his lady, 'that instances of the same kindness were more recent!' And as she spoke she left the room.

Fanny soon followed, to prepare for her ride, and the colonel and Miss Stanhope were left *tete-a-tete* for half an hour. With the utmost *finesse* he endeavoured to persuade Amelia into a belief that the person who had rescued Fanny was a person of bad character, pretending that he had a perfect recollection of his person, having seen him tried for the offence he alleged against him.

'All I dread is,' said he, 'that this artful fellow will presume upon the service he has rendered Fanny, and endeavour to interest her in his favour. The girl is so romantically grateful, that it will not be difficult to accomplish such a scheme, and then, depend upon it, we shall suffer by some unforeseen imposition. Join your influence then, dear Miss Stanhope, with mine, and help to frighten Fanny out of her good opinion.'

'If you had not made such a parade about this story,' replied Amelia, 'perhaps I should have been on your side; but, now you seem to set your heart upon it, I shall disappoint you, for I love contradiction; so expect to see me on the opposition benches when the matter comes before the house.'

Col. Ross laughed in apparent good humour, but he devoutly wished his fair friend at New York for her perverseness.

When Fanny had put on her riding habit, she returned to the breakfast parlour, and Miss Stanhope's carriage conveyed the trio to the spot where the grooms were waiting with the horses.

The animal Amelia rode was very spirited, and she frequently expressed her fears that he would be too much for her skill to manage. Fanny, who was the better horsewoman, offered to change with her friend; but the colonel endeavoured to persuade her not to venture such a hazardous undertaking, but rather to return to the carriage, and defer the ride till another day, when a safer horse could be provided for Miss Stanhope.

The giddy Amelia refused to listen to this salutary advice, however; and, as Fanny repeated the offer, the exchange was made; For some time the fiery animal seemed to submit to the superior skill of his new manager, and all went smoothly on, until the sudden elevation of a boy's kite startled him, and darting forward with fury, he presently left his companions far behind him.

Terror deprived Fanny of all power to check his speed, and losing her balance, she was thrown to the ground with a violence that stunned her. And when Col. Ross and Miss Stanhope came up to her, they found her lying, apparently lifeless, in the arms of a gentleman, who had stopped his carriage when he saw the accident, and flown to her assistance.

For the first few minutes they were too much absorbed in terror to observe the countenance of Fanny's supporter; but when, after

the application of cold water to her temples, she revived, and assured her friends that she was not materially hurt, Miss Stanhope instantly recognised, in the features of the gentleman who had assisted Fanny, too strong a resemblance of the Duke of Albemarle to be in doubt of his identity.

Though only a boy of fourteen when she had last seen him, the peculiar cast of his countenance was too remarkable to be mistaken, and she had soon the satisfaction of observing that she had the advantage over her intended husband, and was convinced that her own form had undergone a more material alteration in the space of seven years than his had done, since he appeared not to have the slightest idea who she was.

CHAPTER XI.

A Hoax!

THE Duke of Albemarle, for it was really he, offered his carriage to convey Fanny home; but Amelia replied, 'that as *Miss Stanhope's own* carriage would be there immediately, there was no occasion to intrude upon his politeness.' A groom had been sent in search of the coach, which had conveyed the ladies as far as the Edgware Road, and it was but a very little while before it made its appearance.

The duke instantly recognised the arms, and became the dupe of Miss Stanhope's artifice, by mistaking Fanny for his bride elect; a hoax Amelia had determined upon playing him as soon as she found herself unknown to him.

The duke assisted Fanny to the carriage, and then took his leave, without taking any notice of the discovery he thought he had made, and proceeded to town, full of the most pleasing anti-

cipations of happiness, in his approaching union with a girl of such exquisite beauty as the one he had just been admiring.

He retained but a very slight recollection of the infantile grace that had been presented to him as his future wife, before he left England, and could only remember that he thought her a *pretty girl*, although there was certainly nothing in her appearance that promised such a full harvest of perfection as that he had just been contemplating.

Lord Somertown's house was to be the duke's town residence, until he should be able to fix upon one to his mind, and he alighted there in the highest spirits imaginable, in about half an hour after he had parted with Fanny.

His uncle was pleased to see him so cheerful, as the duke's last letter had been written in a style of despondency that showed he was not very sanguine in his expectations of happiness in his approaching marriage.

When the duke related the accident that had brought him acquainted with Miss Stanhope, Lord Somertown was still better pleased, as the description he gave of the impression her beauty had made upon his fancy, was in the true style of a lover. 'When I saw the lovely creature thrown from her horse,' said his grace, 'terror was the instinctive emotion of my heart; but little did I imagine how deeply my own happiness was concerned in her safety. Thank heaven,' added he, 'the sweet girl, though greatly frightened, was not hurt.'

'Well, well, boy,' answered Lord Somertown, 'I am glad it is as it is, for it would have been an inconvenient thing if the girl had been killed *before* you had married her. Her fortune is very necessary to the repair of yours, as that long Chancery suit with the *pretended* heir to your title cost an immensity of money. I am glad you like the *doll* so well, too, as that will make the matrimonial pill go down easier. For my part, I think all the girls of fashion are exactly alike now-a-days: they all resemble *walking-sticks* in their shapes, and French puppets in their faces; their dress consists of exactly enough of drapery to attract one's eyes, whilst it is sufficiently scanty and transparent to shock one's modesty; and there is so much unmeaning frippery in their conversation, and so little delicacy or good sense in their conduct, that I am con-

vinced that the man who marries for *love*, in these days, must be either a *boy* or a *dotard*.'

'Your lordship's picture of female excellence is not very inviting,' said the duke.

'*Female excellence!*' rejoined Lord Somertown, 'why there is no such thing; but, however, I do not wish to set you against the potion you are *obliged* to swallow: you will find out its *bitterness* time enough. Apropos, who was with Miss Stanhope in her unlucky excursion this morning?'

'A lady and a gentleman,' replied the duke.

'The *lady* I dare say I can guess at, for she has picked up an *adventuress*, who is making a good thing out of her; and I hope the first act of your power, when you marry Miss Stanhope, will be to break that connection. I hope the *gentleman* was not a rival though. Girls are such vain creatures that they cannot live without an admirer: and I have begun to be afraid, for some time past, that you would stay so long abroad, that some needy fellow would snatch up the prize before you returned.'

'I heard the young lady, who was with Miss Stanhope, call the gentleman Col. Ross,' said the duke.

'Oh! then all is well,' rejoined Lord Somertown. 'Col. Ross is *married*, so there are no fears from that quarter.'

'I am glad to hear it,' said the duke, 'for there was so much anxiety painted on his countenance, that I could almost have ventured to believe that he was an admirer of the lady who had met the accident. But, my dear uncle, you talk of Miss Stanhope's marrying some *needy man*, as if her fortune was at her own disposal. I thought her father's will insisted upon her marrying me, on the penalty of losing the bulk of her fortune; and that I was bound by a similar injunction to marry none but Amelia.'

'A mere fairy tale invented by my ingenuity,' rejoined Lord Somertown, 'to make you both cement the union I have set my heart upon. As you have fallen in love with the girl, I may venture to disclose the secret to *you*; but I beg you will guard it carefully from Amelia, on whose docility we must not rely a single instant, after that restraint is taken of.'

'Deceive her no longer, I entreat you,' said the duke. 'To be the object of Miss Stanhope's *unrestrained* choice would make me

happier than I can express; and how can I ever know that I am so, whilst she acts under the influence of the supposed clause in her father's will?

'I did not imagine you were such an idiot, Henry,' exclaimed Lord Somertown, angrily; 'you talk of things that never existed. No woman ever had an unbiassed choice in a husband. They are influenced by vanity, avarice, or ambition, and sometimes by all *three*. When you know as much of the sex as *I do*, you will despise them as completely as *I do*. There is no animal so perverse as a headstrong girl; trust not your happiness to her keeping therefore. I have confided my secret to you, and if you betray it I will find a method of revenging the affront.—You ought to know me, Henry,' continued Lord Somertown, looking sternly at the duke: 'I have done *much* to be revenged of those who scorned my power, and *you* have benefited by it; take care, therefore, how you incur my displeasure: no one ever yet did so with *impunity*. You *know* the ties of blood are nothing in my estimation, when exposed to excited *vengeance*. Remember that, and tremble! I leave your mode of acting to yourself, after this caution.'

The duke shuddered as he listened to this exordium, for he well understood his uncle's allusion; and he would gladly have given his title and estate to be freed from the unpleasant sensations, which the recollections it awakened excited in his bosom. He knew, however, the vindictive temper of Lord Somertown too well to hazard the slightest contradiction.

'Where my duty and my inclination go hand in hand,' said his grace, 'there is little fear of my disobeying your lordship's injunctions. To marry Miss Stanhope is the most ardent wish of my heart: that I should do so is your lordship's. I shall not therefore risk the possibility of a disappointment, by divulging the important secret.'

THE LITTLE MENDICANT.

CHAPTER XII.

A Hoax!

IN the meantime Miss Stanhope and Fanny returned to town ; the former full of spirits and drollery, secretly exulting in the imposition she had practised, of which, however, she avoided giving the slightest hint to either of her companions, fearing lest they should impede the success of her plot, before she had an opportunity of laying its foundation with the security she meditated, and which once put in train, she felt certain would defy their genius to overturn.

Fanny's spirits were flurried with the accident she had met with, and she was but ill able to bear the raillery with which her lively friend attacked her.

'My dear Fanny,' said Amelia, 'I really think it would be the safest expedient we could hit upon, to send you into the country, immediately.'

'And why so?' asked Col. Ross ; for Fanny was silent,

'Why don't you perceive,' rejoined Miss Stanhope, 'that she can neither walk nor ride without meeting with adventures and knight-errants. Depend upon it she will be run away with some day, and then we shall lament the temerity that exposed her to such danger.'

Col. Ross bit his lips. It was a suggestion his own anxious heart had often presented to his fancy, but he did not dare to avow it. 'Now don't you think it very likely to happen?' continued Miss Stanhope, looking archly. 'You were afraid of the Adonis she met in the morning, but I have the most reason to be afraid now ; for I will wager a thousand guineas she steals my lover from me before I am a week older.'

'Your lover!' re echoed the colonel, 'for heaven's sake, Miss Stanhope, whom do you allude to?'

'To the Duke of Albemarle,' replied she; 'that was the invincible knight who just now spread his fostering arms to shelter this beautiful damsel.'

As Miss Stanhope spoke, Fanny's cheeks were dyed with crimson, and a deep sigh escaped her. An indistinct feeling like disappointment shot through her heart. She was sorry to hear that the stranger she had thought so agreeable was a man of whom she must think no more. She tried, however, to turn the conversation, by observing, that she wondered the duke had not recognised Miss Stanhope.

'I dare say,' answered Amelia, laughing, 'that the duke thinks me so much improved in beauty, that he does not suspect his happiness in being destined to so lovely a creature, and so his *humility* painted out a fair one more upon a par with his own merits. Well, never mind, my dear, I will not pull caps with you. The duke does not please me, but I shall not say so. Let him cry out first. A few thousands per annum will be a trifling sacrifice in the cause for which Mark Anthony lost the *world!*'

In this unmerciful manner did Amelia continue to roast poor Fanny, until the carriage stopped at Col. Ross's door, and for the first time since they had become acquainted, Fanny felt rejoiced to get rid of her agreeable friend, who could not command time enough to alight to tell Lady Maria Ross 'the *wonders of the ride*,' a circumstance she lamented most pathetically.

Col. Ross was as glad as Fanny to see Amelia depart, for the tempest of jealousy her suggestions had raised in his bosom, required the retirement of his closet to subdue and bring within the limits of his usual self-command. To his closet therefore he flew, as soon as he entered the house, and Fanny repaired to her own chamber, where, throwing herself on her bed, she gave way to the flood of tears that had long been struggling for freedom. She had suppressed them while in Amelia's presence, because she feared she would attribute their flowing to a silly and sudden partiality imbibed by a *first-sight* impression, a species of romance Fanny had always condemned, when conversing with Miss Stanhope on the subject of attachment.

Scarcely, indeed, could she herself tell from whence the weeping propensity originated, but felt most inclined to attribute it to

the influence of her wounded pride, which had shrunk from Miss Stanhope's railing, with a degree of pain very unusual to the naturally humble-minded Fanny.

'Poor outcast orphan as I am,' said the weeping girl, 'dependent on the bounty of strangers, and unblest even with a *name*, my nature assimilates not with such degrading circumstances. I feel no innate symptoms of baseness: why then should I be trampled upon by those whose fortunes are better, although their sentiments may be inferior to mine? Miss Stanhope is blest with fortune, and its sure attendants—*friends*. She can command admirers; it is ungenerous therefore in her to make my insignificance the subject of her amusement.'

These reflections were the bitterest Fanny had ever made; the secret cause that made them so, I leave to my sagacious *female* readers to find out, not in the least doubting that they will be able to ascribe the effect to its genuine cause; and with those who are clear-sighted enough to unravel the mystery, I flatter myself poor Fanny will stand acquitted of *habitual* ill-humour. A little acrimony may surely be excused on so trying an occasion.

In a few hours after Miss Stanhope's return home, she received a note from the Duke of Albemarle, announcing his arrival, and entreating permission to pay his compliments in person to the lady who held his future happiness at her disposal.

Amelia answered the note, and fixed the following morning for receiving the visit of the *impatient lover*. The duke thought this interval an *age*; but he was forced to submit; and the mischievous Amelia enjoyed the double pleasure of reflecting on his present suspense, and approaching disappointment. When the appointed hour arrived, the duke was announced, and entered the apartment where Amelia was sitting at her music, with such a degree of eagerness, that he scarcely gave the servant time to name him ere he stood before her. His impatience, however, was not more evident than his disappointment, when, on Amelia's rising to receive him, he perceived that she was not the lady he expected to see. The words he had begun to speak faltered on his tongue, and he stopped short in the middle of a fine speech, to the diversion of his cruel mistress, and the inexpressible confusion of his own feelings.

The duke was accompanied by Lord Somertown; he did not,

therefore, dare to account for his embarrassment; and that nobleman attributed it solely to the foolishness inseparable from a boy's attachment. The Marquis of Petersfield soon entered the room, and relieved him, in some degree, by turning the conversation upon general subjects.

After some little discussion of the polities and news of the day, Lord Somertown asked the marquis whether he had purchased the pictures at Christie's, which he saw him bidding for?

'I have,' replied Lord Petersfield; 'and if your lordship will do me the favour to give your opinion of a Titian I have amongst the number, it will greatly oblige me?'

'Certainly,' answered Lord Somertown; 'let us look at it directly. The young people,' added he, nodding significantly, 'will excuse our leaving them together for a few minutes.' So saying, the two guardians left the room, and the duke's embarrassment returned with increased violence. Miss Stanhope, who enjoyed her poor lover's confusion, determined to increase it. 'I little thought,' said she, smiling archly, 'when I received such polite attention from your grace yesterday morning, after my unfortunate fall, that it was to the Duke of Albemarle I was indebted for assistance: but your grace seems to have forgotten the whole circumstance, for you have not once inquired how I am after my fright.'

The duke was struck dumb at this speech; he mechanically put his hand to his eyes, as if to ascertain whether they were *really* his own eyes, and Miss Stanhope burst into a fit of laughter that completely disconcerted him.

'It is time,' said she, 'to finish the joke. I perceive your grace's distress, which is, indeed, an awkward one; and although I have been mischievous enough to enjoy it for a little while, I cannot find in my heart to protract it any longer. I have entered most unwillingly into the deceit that is practised upon you, and I feel myself unequal to the task of imposing any longer upon your credulity. I will, therefore, be candid, provided your grace will pledge your word and honour that you will not own I have done so, until I give you leave.'

The duke, whose curiosity was raised to the highest pitch by this preamble, and whose hopes began to revive at the same time,

readily entered into the conditional promise, and Miss Stanhope proceeded with her *hoax*.

'Amelia Stanhope,' said she, 'is a whimsical creature; for, although I love her dearly, nobody is quicker in discovering her errors than I am. This giddy girl could not bear the idea of being introduced to her husband elect as a commodity he was obliged to take, whether he liked it or not; and having read in some novel, I suppose, of the metamorphoses of lovers to render themselves more amiable in the eyes of those they wished to please, she determined to get up a little drama, which was to be performed in honour of your grace's arrival. In this piece *I* have the principal part, for I am honoured by personating Miss Stanhope, whilst she herself has assumed the simple guise which belongs to me, and which you will see her perform with admirable grace and *naïveté*. In that disguise she expects to win your grace's heart; and, if I have any skill in augury, her expectations are not ill-founded. Lord Somertown and the marquis are both in the secret, and they are anticipating the pleasure of seeing your embarrassment, when you find yourself entangled in an attachment so seemingly contrary to their wishes, and which the *denouement* of the piece is to dissipate in the prettiest manner imaginable. The moment I saw your grace enter the room this morning, I recollected your features, and knew you for the gentleman who assisted Miss Stanhope yesterday morning. The hoax I knew, therefore, *must* fall to the ground, and this determined me to tell you of it first; and if you have half a grain of wit, you will turn the tables upon the authors of it, by appearing to believe things as they represent them, and acquiescing in their wishes as to the proposed alliance. This will secretly mortify them, whilst you can insure Amelia's good will by clandestine testimonies of your admiration; and by private marriage with her under her borrowed character, you can put the most romantic finish to the whole affair. Rest assured of my assistance, provided you keep the secret; and when you have seen the pretended Fanny, you will be better able to tell *how far* you will like to proceed under *my* directions.'

It is impossible to describe the astonishment and delight that filled the duke's mind as Amelia laid her pretended scheme before him; but although he wondered, he did not doubt. He readily,

therefore, promised to act under the direction of his treacherous guide, who, in return, assured him that he would see the *real* Miss Stanhope that night, if he should meet them at the Opera.

The arrangement was but just made when the two lords returned, and the duke soon after took his leave, saying, as he quitted the room, 'At the Opera, then, madam, I shall hope to renew the pleasure I have enjoyed this morning.' Amelia nodded assent, and the lover departed, accompanied by Lord Somertown, neither of them dreaming of the trick Miss Stanhope had been playing.

She, however, was so diverted with the thoughts of it, and so delighted with the success which had crowned her first attempts, that she was in perfect ecstasies, and could scarcely perform the duties of her toilet, for laughing at the frolic.

CHAPTER XIII.

Cross Purposes.

As the duke and Lord Somertown returned together in the carriage, the latter said with a smile, 'And do you really think the impression you have received *indelible*? Do you believe your heart *invincible* to any other attachment?'

'My heart,' replied the duke, 'must be very deceitful if it has not received a lasting impression. I *think* I shall not *easily* change.'

'I am glad you speak *dubiously* upon the subject,' answered Lord Somertown, laughing; 'it shows you are less of the *blockhead* than I took you to be, from your *first* rhapsody. I wish you to marry Miss Stanhope, but I don't think it necessarily follows that you should make a *fool* of yourself!'

The duke smiled, but he made no reply. He attributed Lord Somertown's asperity, not to his natural morose disposition, but to

the particular mortification he felt at supposing he, the duke, admired the *fictitious*, instead of the *real* Miss Stanhope.

Nothing more, however, passed on the subject between them; and the duke passed the hours that intervened between that and the *Opera*, in arranging his plans respecting the double part he was to act, so as to keep up the *farce* of attention to the *pretended*, and yet satisfy the rightful sovereign that he was devoted to her alone.

In the meantime, Miss Stanhope called upon Fanny to entreat her to accompany her to the *Opera*, and spend a few days with her at the Marquis of Petersfield's. Fanny did not appear much inclined to join the party; but after a little persuasion, and a good deal of raillery upon her *sudden* predilection for solitude, she yielded to her lively friend, and promised to make one in the Marchioness of Petersfield's box that evening, and accompany Amelia home for a few days, provided the scheme was approved by Lady Maria Ross, who was also of the party; and about *half-past nine* they entered the *Opera House*.

The poor duke had been there ever since the opening of the doors, devoutly cursing the fashionable folly which rendered it vulgar to see the beginning of any public exhibition.

His grace was in the pit, with his eyes fixed on that part of the gay hemisphere where he expected the rising of the star he worshipped. No sooner had he recognised the entrance of the party, than he flew to join them.

Miss Stanhope received his compliments with a smile, and turning to Fanny, begged leave to introduce her *friend* to his grace.

'*Miss Fanny*,' said she, emphatically; '*I would* add another name if *I could*, but *I must* leave that for your grace's ingenuity to supply in what manner you please.' The latter part of this was spoken in a low voice, and the arch smile that accompanied it, convinced the duke that Amelia alluded to her own assumed character.

The admiration the duke had felt at the first interview with Fanny was increased at this moment: there was a dignity in her look and manner he had not before observed, and the expression that beamed from her beautiful eyes was calculated to awe, as well as to enchant.

The cause of this change in the usual appearance of Fanny, which generally gave the idea of feminine softness, rather than dig-

nity, originated in the peculiarity of her feelings respecting the duke.

His appearance had struck her as the most agreeable she had ever seen, before she knew who he was; and when she learnt the disagreeable truth, she instantly determined to subdue the slight partiality she felt. Miss Stanhope's raillery had roused her pride; and her promise not to 'pull caps' with her for the duke, seemed to imply that she thought Fanny would be glad to attract his grace's notice, if she could do it with impunity. 'I wish not to interfere with Amelia's lovers,' thought she; 'and she shall see that the duke is not an object to excite my ambition.'

Full of these proud resolutions, Fanny's eyes wore a look of *hauteur* very different from their usual expression; yet was the change an improvement, as it gave a spirit to her beauty that rendered it more striking and impressive.

Deep blushes mantled on her cheeks as the duke paid his compliments to her, but the coldness with which she turned away from him, the moment he had done speaking, mortified, though it tended to increase his passion.

In vain did the duke endeavour to engage her in conversation; her laconic answers, politely, but coldly given, still terminated every subject he started.

In the coffee room, after the Opera was over, Lord Somertown joined the party, and the duke's attention to Fanny was not lost upon that cynical nobleman. 'The boy is a fool,' said he, mentally, 'and ready to fall in love with every school-girl he meets with. A few hours ago he was dying for Miss Stanhope, and now the ideot is worshipping a new divinity; but I know *boys* too well to notice their folly. Opposition only gives fire to romantic love; the spark will go out of itself, if the breath of contradiction does not fan it into flames.'

The next day the Duke of Albemarle paid Miss Stanhope an early visit. 'What an amiable creature are you, my dear madam,' said he, 'in showing such compassion to me. Had you left me in ignorance, on this trying occasion, my sufferings would have been insupportable.'

'It is plain you think me very *amiable*,' replied Amelia, laughing, 'when you confess so candidly to my face, that the bare idea

of being united to me would have been insupportable to you. But if Jove forgave the *perjuries* of lovers, surely mere mortals may pardon their *rudeness*.'

'Nay,' interrupted the duke, 'you wrong me, madam, and wrest my words from their real meaning. I did not say the idea of marrying you would be insupportable; it was my *suspense*, respecting the object of my choice, that I exclaimed against; and as that choice, as sudden as it is ardent, was made before I had ever looked at you, surely the shadow of offence cannot be imputed to me.'

'Tolerably well turned,' answered Miss Stanhope; 'but tell me, my lord, candidly, supposing all that I have told you should be proved a mere fabrication of my own brain, how would you be inclined to act? Would you play Mark Anthony, or Shylock? Would you throw away the world for love, or insist upon your "*bond*?"'

The duke started—he did not like the suggestion; it gave rise to doubts that had not before tormented him, and he knew not what to answer. Amelia saw his confusion, and enjoyed it.

'I'll tell you what,' said she, 'I am afraid you are too lukewarm a lover for Amelia Stanhope; she is romance personified, and the man who would not run away with her, at the risk of never possessing a shilling of her fortune, will never marry her, you may depend upon it.'

'The man who could think of *fortune*, when put in competition with the possession of *Miss Stanhope*, would be unworthy such a prize!' said the duke. 'But why, dear madam, torment me with queries that involve even your own veracity, as well as my happiness, in clouds of obscurity?'

'I don't know why I started the difficulty,' said Miss Stanhope, laughing, 'unless it were meant to increase your passion; for, say what you will, there is no stimulus in love equal to difficulty.'

'There is a charm in your mischief-loving spirit, that would be dangerous to contemplate,' said the duke, 'to a man less a captive than I am. The witchery of your smiles is increased by the mischief that seems to lurk beneath them; and those you most delight to torment, would be most likely to feel *pleasure* from the infliction.'

'Don't waste your time in complimenting me,' said Amelia, laughing, 'for betide what will, from me you can have no expectations. Had I not been quite clear upon that head, I would not have undertaken the part I am playing.'

'If then you are so clear as to what I may hope for from yourself,' said the duke, 'deign, dear madam, to inform me what are my dependencies with your friend.'

'There are few women who can answer for *themselves*,' said Amelia, 'and you are unreasonable enough to expect that I should answer for *my friend*. I do not give so wide a latitude to the duties of friendship. Thus far I will venture to tell you, if you win Amelia Stanhope, you must possess more merit than is at this moment apparent to your humble servant. Exert your *energies*, therefore, my lord duke, and who knows what may happen?'

'Provoking, tantalizing girl,' said the duke, in a tone of impatience, 'how can you make an amusement of my sufferings, and laugh at my distress? Surely such softness of feature was never intended to enshrine a heart so impervious to humanity?'

'A pretty story, truly,' exclaimed Amelia, 'that I am to be stigmatized with the appellation of *barbarian* because I do not melt, forsooth, into sympathetic tears of pity at the unheard-of sufferings of a man, who, having been *eight and forty* hours in love, is still uncertain whether his mistress approves of him or not!!! Thank heaven my sensibility does not keep pace with your impetuosity; if it did, my poor nerves would be in a lamentable situation indeed!'

The duke could not help smiling at the ludicrous turn Amelia gave to his complaints, though he little imagined the full extent of the irony she addressed to him.

'To be serious for a moment, if that indeed be possible,' said the duke, 'will my fair instructress condescend to tell me what I am to say to my uncle, when he questions me as to my reception by Miss Stanhope? Am I to report a *gracious* hearing or not?'

'Nay, I leave that to your own discretion,' replied Amelia. 'I am the *ostensible* Miss Stanhope, and I am sure I have received you very *kindly*: therefore you may safely say so. But I would advise you to throw in a few hints, when you are talking to your uncle, how much you would prefer the *portionless* *Fanny* to

the rich heiress, provided you could follow your own inclination.

'Lord Somertown will *pretend to reprove* your imprudence, but he will be secretly pleased with your penetration and sound judgment; for he is as eager for the success of the romance as my friend, and quite as *deep in the plot*. Suffer all the preliminaries to be settled, just as if you intended to marry Miss Stanhope in her proper character, and then give zest to the joke, run away with her a few days before the one fixed for your nuptials, under the fictitious name of Fatherless Fanny. Oh! the story will make the prettiest novel that ever was, and Amelia Stanhope will be better pleased with the *denouement* than any other person!'

'Would to Heaven I were sure of that!' said the duke; 'but the expression of her eyes does not speak so flattering a language.'

'Nay, never mind that,' replied Amelia, laughing, 'for that may be as foreign from the truth as the rest of the plot. "Faint heart never won a fair lady." Go on, therefore, and prosper. You have my good wishes, and Miss Stanhope's too, or I am mistaken!'

CHAPTER XIV.



The Concert.

MISS STANHOPE, without disclosing a tittle of her plot to Fanny, managed it so well that she made her act in concert with her. The necessity of meeting the duke continually was very irksome to Fanny; but Amelia laid her plans so adroitly, that the former could not excuse herself from joining the parties of the latter, without giving the very reason she wished to conceal.

Instead of feeling flattered by the duke's attentions, as she would have done had she considered herself entitled to receive his

addresses, Fanny looked upon them as little short of insult, since the pointed manner in which they were paid her, left her no possibility of mistaking their import.

‘To what end,’ would she say to herself, ‘does the Duke of Albemarle address himself to *me*? Does he not know that I am acquainted with the nature of his engagements to Miss Stanhope? Are they not publicly acknowledged to the world by the preparations that are making for their union? It is true that Amelia professes to dislike the duke; nay, even affects to ridicule him; but she puts no barrier in the way of his addresses. He is received as her acknowledged lover; and though it is sufficiently evident that there is no love on either side, yet, if *convenience* be the motive of their union, it will be nevertheless a *marriage*; and therefore renders his addresses to any other woman a gross insult to delicacy.’

While these ideas were passing in Fanny’s mind, the duke, who supposed her a party in a plot to deceive him, and who exulted in the knowledge of that plot, persevered in paying her the most marked attention, still carefully adhering to Miss Stanhope’s injunctions not to give a hint of his knowledge of the deception. The duke, who joined to a person the most engaging a perfection in the art of pleasing that might have rendered a less handsome man irresistible, was a general favourite with the ladies, and his attentions to Fanny were not observed without exciting considerable emotions of envy and malice. The *nameless girl* was already obnoxious to their hatred from the *eclat* of her beauty, and now they gave vent, in the most unequivocal terms, to their rancour and ill-nature. ‘It was a shame,’ they said, ‘that a girl like that should be suffered to rival a young lady of Miss Stanhope’s consequence; and they wondered the Marquis of Petersfield and Lord Somertown would allow of such doings. They ought to interpose their authority, and remove a person so unfit for the circles of fashion as Fanny certainly was.’

These whispers reached Lord Somertown’s ear, and as he had always felt the most decided aversion for poor Fanny, he determined to speak to Col. Ross and Lady Maria on the subject, and try if nothing could be done to get rid of so dangerous a person before the mischief had gone too far. His lordship recollects with regret, that he had himself betrayed the secret to the duke respect-

ing his alliance with Miss Stanhope, at a moment when he had been led to imagine that his nephew was as anxious for the match as he was ; and by this imprudence the duke knew that there was no penalty attached to his dereliction from the proposed marriage.

After all the pains Lord Somertown had taken, and the *guilt* he had incurred, to insure the title of Albemarle to his nephew, the bare idea of his ingratitude was distraction !—Should he marry the nameless, portionless girl, that seemed now to engross all his attention, Lord Somertown felt that he should scarcely survive the event, since the hatred he felt for the innocent object of his nephew's affection was as violent as it was undeserved.

From the first moment he had seen the sweet girl, he had hated her ; and the expression of his eyes had been so true to the feelings of his soul, that Fanny had felt a terror she could neither account for nor subdue, whenever she had found herself the object of his scrutiny.

The Duke of Albemarle had been in England now about two months ; and it was daily expected that his grace's nuptials would be shortly fixed with the rich Miss Stanhope, whilst the busy circles that reported these conjectures never failed to add, that '*the divine friendship*' that subsisted between Amelia and Fanny would be a source of *much pleasure* to the *duke*, whenever the union took place : and as, no doubt, *all parties were agreed*, it might prove a happy *compact*.

The only persons who heard nothing of these whispers were those most concerned in their import,—the *trio* themselves. That they were the objects of particular observation they could not fail of being conscious ; but this they attributed to the celebrity of Miss Stanhope's fortune, and her approaching nuptials.

At a concert, one evening, however, the buzz was more than usually active ; and Fanny, who was more particularly the object of ill-natured observation, felt the painful impression of the whisper in circulation. Her nature, delicate and modest, shrunk from the general stare, and sufferings the most exquisite were painted on her intelligent countenance.

Not so Miss Stanhope. She, with her accustomed liveliness, was listening to the nonsense of Sir Everard Mornington, a young man of dashing celebrity, who, besides being a member of the

Four-in-Hand Club, was the epitome of every thing ridiculous in the long list of fashionable folly. His fortune was large, and his person handsome; and therefore even those people who had sense enough to laugh at his foibles, pretended to tolerate them in consideration of his extreme good nature and generosity. In Miss Stanhope's eyes, however, he rose above toleration, for she doated upon eccentricity, and her ear was charmed by the frequent repetitions of those *elegant* phrases *prime* and *bang-up*, and the rest of that unintelligible *slang* which has lately been substituted for good sense and good breeding. The relation of his exploits in the Olympic art of charioteering, was more interesting to her feelings than she could possibly have found in the annals of the most distinguished conquerors. Sir Everard was not insensible to the honour of Miss Stanhope's approbation; and from the first evening of their acquaintance, he had determined that she alone, of all the girls he knew, black, brown, or fair, should sit beside him on the *dicky*, when he drove to the temple of Hymen. The *slight* difficulty of a *prior engagement* was nothing to his magnanimous soul. 'There was but little merit,' he said, 'in winning a race where all the competitors started fair; but to overtake and *overturn* a seemingly successful rival, would be *prime* and *bang-up* with a vengeance!'

The duke had been conversing with Fanny at the beginning of the entertainment, and paying her those thousand delicate and nameless attentions which mark so well the affection of the heart. Fanny had received them, as she always did, with the most frigid coldness. When a delicate mind feels it necessary to struggle with a growing partiality for an object every way calculated to render the task difficult, the effort is made with all the fervour of determined virtue, and no outward symptom betrays the struggle within. The duke felt piqued at her indifference, and began to doubt whether he had not been deceived by his informer, when he was taught to suppose she had cherished a wish to enslave him.

Full of these thoughts, he had quitted Fanny's side, and wandered to the opposite side of the room.

Lady Maria Ross, who sat on the other side of Fanny, was engaged in deep conversation with some ladies near her, and the poor girl was left exposed to the whispers and the observations of the

surrounding ladies, as we just now related, a situation of whose disagreeableness she was by no means insensible.

Absorbed in her own unpleasant reflections, she did not observe that a gentleman had taken the seat next her, which the duke had just left, until his voice, addressing her, roused her from the reverie.

‘Once more,’ said he, in a tone which Fanny instantly knew to be the voice of the stranger whose politeness had rescued her from insult in the Park, on the morning of her well-remembered walk; ‘once more I am so happy as to meet with the sweet girl whose image has lived in my heart ever since the first moment I beheld her. Yet mistake me not, gentle lady,’ continued he, speaking more softly, ‘I am no lover come to offer the incense of flattery at the shrine of beauty. That passion is for ever extinct in this bosom: it is buried in the tomb of her you resemble. The offering I bring you is friendship the most sublime; such love as guardian angels feel for those they watch over. Deign then to listen to my warning voice:—temptation and danger, nay, even death itself, appear to threaten you; refuse not then the friend that heaven itself has sent.’

It is impossible to describe the variety of emotions that filled the bosom of Fanny as she listened to this strange address. The most predominant was fear; terrified at perceiving that she was observed more than ever, her first impulse was to fly; and she was rising from her seat, unconscious of the action, when she felt the stranger’s hand laid upon her arm to prevent her removal, and she mechanically re-seated herself.

‘You seem to fear observation,’ said he, in a gentle voice, ‘and yet you were about to excite it in the most imprudent manner. Sit still, sweet girl, and be not afraid of the only friend this room contains for you.’

There was a charm in the voice of the stranger that had a powerful effect upon the heart of Fanny; she had felt it the first time he spoke to her, and it seemed to increase rather than diminish in the repetition.

She raised her timid eyes to his face, and wondered at the delight that thrilled through her frame, as she read affection in those of the persuasive speaker. She immediately checked the emotion,

and endeavoured to recover her serenity, but she could only look composed; the feelings of her mind were not to be subdued. The penetrating eye of the stranger perceived the struggle, and again addressed her.

'I am impelled towards you, lovely girl,' said he, 'by an interest as undefinable as it is irresistible. I observe with pleasure that you participate in my feelings, although the sympathy is involuntary. The instinct of the soul is incapable of error; I am persuaded, therefore, that we shall one day be satisfied why we experience the emotions that now agitate us both.'

Fanny continued silent during the whole of this address; for she feared to trust her voice, lest its tremulous sound should betray her agitation. She did not feel so well assured that it was the effect of divine inspiration, and therefore chose rather to check than encourage it.

She had been combating with the rising partiality that had been awakened in her bosom by the Duke of Albemarle, and she could not help feeling both surprised and provoked, that a person, of whose very name she was ignorant, and whom she had seen but once before, should be able to excite sentiments of tenderness in her heart, far superior to any she had ever before experienced; and which, although they bore no resemblance to the partiality she felt for the duke, were so new and undefinable, that she trembled to admit them.

'I perceive,' said the stranger, observing that Fanny's reverie was both deep and painful, 'I perceive that the abruptness of my address has alarmed your delicacy. But fear not, sweet girl; I repeat *I am no lover*; consider me as a monitor and friend, and listen to my admonitions: You are surrounded by treachery; beware of the Duke of Albemarle; beware of Col. Ross; but, above all, beware of Lord Somertown.'

Fanny turned pale. 'Good heaven,' exclaimed she, 'what danger threatens me? The people of whom you warn me are *nothing* to me. Why, then, should I fear them? Explain your mysterious caution, I implore you; for it terrifies without instructing me.'

'Explanation *here* is impossible,' replied the stranger; 'but

meet me in the park where I first saw you, to-morrow morning, and I will reveal the mystery that perplexes you.'

'Meet a stranger by appointment!' said Fanny, colouring with indignation, 'it is *you, sir*, I ought to *fear*, who advise me so imprudently;' and rising from her seat as she spoke, she quitted the side of the stranger, and immediately joined Miss Stanhope, who had just beckoned her to come to her. 'You are a pretty miss, indeed,' said she, laughing, as Fanny approached her: 'two conquests in an evening are too much.' 'How *two* conquests?' repeated Fanny; 'I do not understand you.' 'Oh! I will enlighten your understanding, my dear—you have been first flirting with the Duke of Albemarle, and now I have caught you coqueting with the rich Mr. Hamilton.'

'Mr. Hamilton?' said Fanny; 'is the gentleman who has just been talking to me named Hamilton?' 'Yes, my dear: do you like the name better than Albemarle?'

'Oh, no,' said Fanny, *naively*, 'I only repeated the name because the house Lady Ellincourt purchased in Yorkshire belonged to a Mr. Hamilton, and I have always had my thoughts about that house.'

'Well, and now I suppose you will have *your own* thoughts about its late master,' said Miss Stanhope, 'for that gentleman in black is he. The late Mr. Hamilton left his immense fortune to him, on the condition of taking his name. He met him abroad, and took a fancy to him for some of his winning ways that seemed to have charmed you; for I hear he was no relation to him.—There's a history for you, my dear; so now let's have *your* part of the romance. Has he been making love to you? He looked mighty sweet, methinks.'

'No, indeed,' said Fanny, 'he has not been making love to me; but do you know he is the stranger I met with in Hyde Park, that morning when Col. Ross was so angry with me? And he is the person the colonel said was a *swindler*.'

'Charming, charming!' rejoined Miss Stanhope, 'the plot thickens. Well my dear, I like the story vastly, and you shall marry which you like, the duke or Mr. Hamilton.'

'It is ridiculous to talk of marrying either,' replied Fanny, in a tone of vexation.

‘It is not so ridiculous as you may choose to think it,’ interrupted Miss Stanhope, ‘for I have the most unquestionable authority for asserting that the Duke of Albemarle is in love with you.’

Amelia raised her voice a little as she pronounced the latter part of her speech, and Lord Somertown’s ear caught the important information it conveyed, as he was approaching in order to speak to her. It was enough to rouse all the demon within him, and turning upon his heels, he sought for Col. Ross, to whom he merely said, that ‘he wished for a private conference with him the next morning, on a subject of importance, and begged to know whether he would do him the honour of receiving him to breakfast with him.’

The colonel said, ‘he was disengaged, and would certainly expect his lordship at the hour appointed.’ Lord Somertown bowed, and immediately quitted Colonel Ross for the purpose of more strictly observing Fanny.

The result of this observation was not pleasing to him, for he had soon the pain of seeing the Duke of Albemarle resume his place beside her, and Lord Somertown had been too long an inhabitant of the world to remain any longer ignorant of his nephew’s sentiments respecting her.

Fury flashed from his eye as conviction shot through his heart, and the emotion was so strong, that the following words escaped his clinched teeth, as his terrible glance fell upon the object of his hatred:—‘Base worm! thou shalt perish for daring to oppose my wishes.’

His rage was changed to horror, however, when a voice, close to his ear, exclaimed in an awful tone,—‘*Thou, too, art perishable, frail mortal! thy power is limited, thy days are numbered—beware, then, how thou threatenest another! An eye observes thee that thou dreamest not of.*’

A cold shiver ran through Lord Somertown’s frame as he listened to accents too well remembered; scarcely did he dare to turn his head, lest he should behold a face the voice had too fatally recalled. But curiosity is an impulse more powerful than fear itself. Agitated as he was, with horror and dismay, he could not resist the eager dictates of that arbitrary power, and his eye involuntarily sought the person who had uttered the terrific words: it caught a glimpse of his retiring form, and, as if blasted by the view, in-

stantly closed, his limbs stiffened, and he fell on the ground. The surrounding company were terrified at this catastrophe, though unconscious of its cause. Lord Somertown was raised from the ground and conveyed to an adjoining apartment, medical assistance sent for, and an *apoplectic fit* was the name given to the visitation of *remorse*.

The confusion this accident occasioned put an end to the concert. The company hastily called for their carriages and retired ; all except those immediately connected with his lordship. They stayed and witnessed his recovery from the stupor into which an accusing conscience had plunged him ; they saw his wildly staring eyes, as he cast them around the room in search of the spectre that had alarmed him ; and listened with horror to his incoherent allusions to scenes of former guilt and cruelty.

The Duke of Albemarle, however, finding that his uncle uttered expressions that too plainly told that all was not right within, proposed his being removed to his own house ; and as the physician pronounced it might be done with safety, his lordship was supported to his carriage in the arms of his servants, and by that conveyed to where he was put to bed. His pillow, swelling with down, received his aching head ; the rich drapery that hung round his bed, shaded his dim eyes from the tapers that burnt on his table, and busy attendants crowded around him to prevent his wishes.

But, alas ! repose was not to be found within the sumptuous apartment ; no down could administer the sweets of rest to a disturbed conscience ; and although the silken hangings might exclude the blaze of waxen tapers, they could not shelter the mind's eye from the bright flame of conviction that awakened busy memory, and bid her inflict tortures which could neither be borne nor eluded. The ready domestic, however willing to anticipate his lord's wishes, could not present him with the only cordial his fevered lip pouted for—the water of oblivion, whose friendly powers might teach him to forget his guilt, and thereby escape the remorse that harrowed up his soul, and filled him with unutterable anguish.

CHAPTER XV.

A Morning Visit.

ALAS! why does not remorse induce repentance? Too often we find it has a contrary effect, stirring up in the soul, poisoned by guilt, sentiments of fury and revenge instead of contrition and amendment. Lord Somertown was torn by the recollection of the deeds of cruelty and injustice he had been guilty of; yet, instead of wishing to atone for his guilt, or making restitution to the injured parties as far as circumstances would admit of, his malicious spirit panted to commit more outrages; and although struggling as it were in the grasp of death, he seemed to wish a prolongation of his life merely to use it for the destruction of others.

His ear had convinced him that a being still existed of whose death he had long thought himself certain; and the tempest of passions that conviction awaked in his soul, gave energy to his debilitated frame, and roused him from the lethargy into which terror had plunged him, when first the surprise assailed him.

'I *will* live,' said the furious earl, raising himself in his bed, with an energy that astonished his attendants; 'I *will* live, for I have much to accomplish before I die.'

Supported by the fervour which had seized his mind, Lord Somertown was able to keep his appointment the ensuing morning with Col. Ross, who felt a surprise bordering on incredulity, when the man he had thought dying the preceding evening was introduced into his library, and he beheld his erect carriage and ardent eye, in neither of which remained a single vestige of indisposition.

'I feel both rejoiced and astonished,' exclaimed the colonel, as he placed his noble visitor in an arm-chair, 'to see your lordship so wonderfully recovered from the illness that alarmed us all so greatly last night.'

'Weak minds,' replied his lordship, 'are apt to yield to the slightest stroke of sickness; but mine is not cast in that mould, colonel. The business which has brought me hither is important to the *dignity* of my family, and forcible indeed must have been that power which could have tempted me to defer it. Your high character for politeness, colonel, induces me to hope that you will give me the information I require; and, perhaps, subsequent circumstances may induce you to lend your assistance to the forwarding of my views in an affair of much moment.'

The colonel bowed, and Lord Somertown proceeded: 'You have a *girl* under your care who is a perfect enigma; would you, sir, inform me who she really is?'

'That is not in my power, my lord,' replied Col. Ross; 'my ignorance on that subject is as profound as your lordship's.'

'Astonishing!' rejoined Lord Somertown: 'is not Lady Maria better informed?'

'I assure your lordship, with truth,' said the colonel, 'that neither Maria nor myself know the least little concerning the person you allude to, excepting that she is a foundling, and is called Fanny. She has no surname, nor do I believe the poor girl is any wiser on this subject than ourselves.'

'If it be not impertinent,' said Lord Somertown, 'may I ask what motive could induce people of rank, like Col. Ross and Lady Maria, to make a person so obscure the inmate of their house, and to introduce her into parties where her doubtful origin must be a source of pain to herself, and resentment to those who feel their dignity insulted by having such a person obtruding upon them? But, perhaps, the romantic spirit of these novel-reading times suggested the probability that the girl might be some princess in disguise, fled from her persecutors to take refuge in this land of benevolence and philanthropy.'

'Indeed!' replied Colonel Ross, 'we never gave ourselves the trouble of conjecturing who the girl might be, but merely took her under our care at the request of Lady Dowager Ellincourt, who is a relation and very intimate friend of my wife's.'

'Lady Dowager Ellincourt!' repeated Lord Somertown, and his lip quivered with stifled rage. 'If she be an *eleve* of Lady Ellincourt's, there is every thing to be expected from her which intrigue

and artifice can accomplish. I mortally hate that woman!' continued his lordship, knitting his brow; ' and the babbling fool her son is even more intolerable than herself. But this has nothing to do with the business before us. Are you aware, colonel, of the mischief your mistaken condescension to this beggar's brat has occasioned?'

'No, my lord,' replied Col. Ross; 'I never yet supposed her of consequence enough to become the source of mischief to any one; unless, indeed,' added he, smiling, 'the witchery of her beauty has enslaved your lordship. The girl is certainly a lovely creature!'

Lord Somertown's eyes struck fire.—' You do not mean to insult me, colonel, I hope?' said he.

'Simple *bardinage*, I assure your lordship,' replied the colonel, laying his hand upon his heart; 'but I beseech your lordship to inform me what crime poor Fanny has committed.'

'In the first place she has formed an intimacy with Miss Stanhope,' replied Lord Somertown, 'which I deem an intolerable degradation to that young lady; and, in the next, acting with the consummate art which those low people generally possess, she has insinuated herself into the favour of my half-witted nephew, who, dazzled with the beauty you extolled so highly, and bewitched by the artful blandishments of the sorceress, fancies himself desperately in love with her; so much so, that forgetful of his engagements to Miss Stanhope, and the dignity of his own rank, he is at this moment planning a scheme to run away with and marry this young adventuress. I have this information from the most unquestionable authority, confirmed by my own observation.'

Colonel Ross was thunderstruck when he heard Lord Somertown declare that the Duke of Albemarle intended to marry Fanny. He had observed the duke's attentions to the object of his own designs, but an idea of marriage had never entered his imagination; the cold disdain which the countenance of Fanny uniformly displayed whenever the duke addressed her, in company, had thrown Colonel Ross off his guard, and lulled his fears to sleep. He seemed now to awaken to a sudden sense of his danger, and his rage was little inferior to Lord Somertown's, as the conviction darted through his mind.

'Consummate hypocrite!' exclaimed he, 'so young and so artful! The coolness with which she always appeared to treat the duke made me believe his grace's overtures were of a different nature.'

'I rejoice,' said Lord Somertown, 'that Col. Ross appears to see this affair in the same atrocious light that I do. Nothing, surely, is so unpardonable as when a low person, like that girl, takes advantage of the kindness shown her by persons of a superior rank, to steal into a noble family, and for ever tarnish the honour of it by so unequal a union. Good heavens! the Duke of Albemarle to marry a foundling! a girl without a name!'

'Horrid, indeed!' exclaimed Col. Ross, whose objections to the union sprung from a very different cause to what Lord Somertown imagined.

'Your feelings, colonel, are so consonant to mine upon this subject,' said his lordship, 'that I flatter myself you will not refuse your aid in preventing so fatal a termination of my hopes as this ill-assorted marriage.'

'Your lordship may command me,' replied Col. Ross: 'there is nothing that I would not do to prevent it.'

Lord Somertown shook the colonel by the hand—'My good friend,' said his lordship, 'this ready compliance exceeds my hopes. I will now lay aside all reserve, and you and I will presently understand each other, I am sure.'

Lord Somertown was right: Col. Ross was not one of the scrupulous sort, when he had any self-gratification in view; and as Lord Somertown's proposals all appeared calculated to further his own wishes, he started no objection to the diabolical scheme his lordship laid before him. What that scheme was will appear hereafter, for the conversation was interrupted by the appearance of a servant, who announced the arrival of a visitor.

'Mr. Hamilton,' said he, 'requests the favour of a few minutes' conference, sir,' said the servant, bowing: 'he is waiting in the breakfast room.'

'Hamilton! Hamilton!' repeated the colonel, 'I don't know him; why didn't you say I was engaged?'

'I did, sir, but he would not be denied. He said he knew you were at home, because Lord Somertown's carriage was waiting at

the door, and he heard his lordship make an appointment with you at the concert last night.'

'Oh,' said the colonel, 'then it must be the rich Hamilton; for he was there last night, I was told. But I don't know him when I see him; so what he can want of me I cannot conceive.'

'Mr. Hamilton asked if Miss Fanny was at home, first,' said the servant; 'and when I told him she was on a visit at the Marquis of Petersfield's, he gave his name, and desired to see you, sir.'

'Very well,' replied the colonel; 'tell Mr. Hamilton I will wait upon him immediately.'

The servant withdrew.

'I think we may make some use of this circumstance,' said Lord Somertown. 'This is some lover of that artful girl's.'

'Perhaps so, indeed,' answered Col. Ross, reddening, for he hated to hear of any lover for Fanny. 'Does your lordship know Mr. Hamilton? He seems to know you.'

'That may be very possible,' replied Lord Somertown, answering the colonel's last observation; 'many people know *me*, of whom I have not the most distant knowledge. This Hamilton is one of them. He may be a *rich* man, but he is certainly not a man of *consequence*; for I *never* heard of him before.'

Lord Somertown now ordered his chariot, and taking leave of the colonel, he said, 'Remember your promise, and command me in what way you choose.'

'Your lordship need not fear,' answered his base associate, 'I am too much interested in the event to be lukewarm in the cause.'

Lord Somertown nodded assent, and proceeded to his carriage. He readily believed the colonel's assertion that he was *interested* in the event, because he had promised him a *borough*, for which honour he had long been sighing.

Colonel Ross was a deep politician, and a strong party man: there was enough, therefore, in the promise, to awaken his energy. But his lordship knew not the most powerful stimulus to the base action he had undertaken; he knew not that, urged by a brutal passion, which, according to the jargon of modern depravity, he dignified with the name of love, this pretended patriot was secretly rejoicing that an opportunity offered of uniting in the same cause his ambition and his inclination.

CHAPTER XVI.

A Proposal.

WHEN Colonel Ross entered the breakfast room, he was struck with the noble appearance of the gentleman who was there waiting for him, and a faint recollection of having once seen him before stole across his mind as he paid his compliments to him.

Mr. Hamilton appeared to be about forty years of age, or hardly so much, for there were traces of suffering on his countenance that seemed to tell a tale of sorrow rather than of years. His features were beautiful, and the expression of high spirit that sparkled in his dark eye, was softened by the benevolence that mingled with its vivid rays; his brow was arched, and his nose a perfect aquiline. His mouth, too, was calculated to inspire his beholders with confidence; candour seemed to play upon his lips, and truth herself gave sanction to the sweet smile that adorned them. I have always thought that feature the most unerring index of the mind. Heaven has made it the organ by which we are intended to make our thoughts known to each other; and although the exalted gift is frequently perverted, the portals through which the speech must pass remain faithful to the purpose of the heart that suggests it. Never did the smile of artful blandishment, or constrained politeness, wear the guise of truth. The words that sound from the mouth may be false, but the curve that marks the lip at their departure is true to the feeling that is either expressed or disguised by their utterance.

It was impossible to find a face formed with more faultless grace than Mr. Hamilton's; it displayed the perfection of manly beauty, yet did the shades of deep melancholy sit on his pensive brow, and cloud his eye with sadness; but it was melancholy that spoke of resignation and fortitude, awakening sympathy allied to respect in the hearts of his beholders.

The dignity with which he returned Colonel Ross's compliments

seemed to be natural to him; and the urbanity of his manners convinced his host that he *must* be *noble* as well as rich, although Lord Somertown had pronounced him to be *nobody*, because not upon the list of his right honourable acquaintances.

It might, perhaps, be the nobility of *nature*, which is, it must be confessed, of more intrinsic value than that conferred by *hereditary* rank. Be that as it may, the colonel felt so little doubt of his guest's claim to respect, that he began an elaborate apology for having kept him waiting so long.

'It is *I* who ought to apologize for my intrusion, sir,' replied Mr. Hamilton, with a benignant smile; 'but I trust, when you know the motive that induced me to take such a liberty, that you will be inclined to forgive me for it.'

The colonel bowed, and Mr. Hamilton proceeded:—

'You have a young lady under your protection, sir, for whom I feel an interest it will be as difficult for me to describe, as I already find it to comprehend the cause of; unless, indeed, it be the resemblance she bears to a dear friend of mine, long since numbered with the dead.'

'Fanny has powerful attractions,' said Col. Ross, rather sarcastically, 'and I think I can understand the sort of interest she has excited in your heart, sir, without any far-fetched illustration of so common an event.'

The blush of resentment mantled on Mr. Hamilton's cheek as he listened to the colonel's illiberal remark.

'Of Miss Fanny's attractions, excepting that powerful one of innocent sweetness that so peculiarly characterizes her countenance, *I* can have a very superficial knowledge,' said Mr. Hamilton, indignantly. 'Your suspicions, sir, are premature. I am not come here in the character of a *lover*; it is a title I disclaim. My heart is for ever shut against the power of beauty; my passions are dead; and philanthropy is the last surviving feeling of my soul. Miss Fanny's features awakened the remembrance of a long-lost friend, and she became immediately an object of inexpressible interest to me. I inquired who she was, and was informed that she is an orphan, and dependant on the bounty of strangers. Whether this tale be true or not, I cannot tell; and therefore came to solicit the favour from you, sir, of further particulars concerning the

young lady. If you will inform me what her name is, and to what family she is related, I shall consider myself greatly your debtor, and will endeavour to forget the too hasty judgment you formed of my intentions, which I now declare to be as pure as parental kindness can dictate. This young lady pleases me; she is poor, and I am rich; I am alone in the world, without a single claim upon me for the inheritance of the immense fortune I enjoy: what, therefore, can I do more likely to conduce to my own happiness, than to insure that of this child of misfortune, by . . .

‘*Marrying* her, I suppose, sir,’ interrupted Colonel Ross, whose predilection in favour of Mr. Hamilton, at his first entrance, was now converted into jealous hatred.

‘I am astonished,’ exclaimed Mr. Hamilton, ‘at your persisting in perverting my meaning, sir. I tell you I am not a lover: and I beg you will attend to what I say, and endeavour to *believe* it.’

‘That would be an effort above me,’ replied the colonel. ‘I must confess, I am not so romantically given as very *easily* to believe, that a sober, middle-aged gentleman, like yourself, Mr. Hamilton, whatever he may profess, would interest himself about a pretty girl, like the one under my protection, for the mere *philanthropic* gratification of disinterestedly providing for her. Under this impression, I am constrained to tell you, sir, that your visits will be dispensed with at this house.

‘You confess that you have no intention of *marrying* Fanny; and as no other overtures *can* be received by her guardians, all questions respecting her from you, sir, will be deemed impertinent.’

As Col. Ross spoke, he rose from his chair, and pulled the bell; a servant appeared.

‘Mr. Hamilton’s carriage,’ said he.

Mr. Hamilton rose indignantly, and darting a look of contempt at the colonel, ‘I have stooped,’ said he, ‘to ask as a favour, what, perhaps, I ought rather to have demanded, as the champion of oppressed innocence. I have marked you, Colonel Ross; and I warn you to beware what you do. We seldom suspect sinister designs in others, unless we have cherished them ourselves.’

‘The application is good in your own case, sir,’ said the colo-

nel, and turned on his heel; for there was a scrutiny in Mr. Hamilton's eye that disconcerted him.

Mr. Hamilton now withdrew; and as he stepped into his chariot, he vowed to devote himself to the protection of the defenceless Fanny. Some hints that had reached his ear in the course of his inquiries respecting her, had awakened suspicions which were now confirmed by the colonel's behaviour.

As soon as Mr. Hamilton was gone, Colonel Ross returned to his study, in order to think over, without the probability of an interruption, the best means that could be devised to prevent Fanny from being informed of Mr. Hamilton's designs.

The colonel did not entertain a doubt that a marriage was her new friend's ultimate view, although, in the beginning of the affair, he chose to assume a more disinterested character. Of that benevolence that delights in making others happy, without one selfish view in the action, Colonel Ross knew nothing; the feelings of his heart, if he had any, had been either stifled in their infancy, or called forth only for selfish, sensual enjoyments.

He was the younger brother of an earl, and provided for by his father, as younger brothers generally are in noble families. The meanness allied to cunning, natural to his disposition, had easily taught him to win upon his elder brother's heart by the blandishment of adulation, and servile submission to his will. The artifice had succeeded, and Lord Ballafyn had rewarded his complaisant brother with a commission and a pretty estate, to support the dignity of the family, in addition to what his father had left him. His marriage with Lady Maria Trentham had increased his fortune, as she had thirty thousand pounds more than her sisters, which had been bequeathed her by her maternal grandfather. But tell me, when was the sordid mind satisfied?

Colonel Ross was avaricious, and extremely proud: it was difficult to reconcile the opposite propensities of these feelings, as the demands of his pride were severe taxes upon his meanness. An opportunity now offered of gratifying *all* his evil tendencies, and he felt the impulse irresistible.

Should Mr. Hamilton's generous intentions be made known respecting Fanny, it might prevent the execution of his scheme, and disappoint his hopes of realizing both riches and power, by the

very act that would give him the uninterrupted possession of the girl he had long secretly sighed for.

Colonel Ross had a head formed for intrigue; he was not, therefore, long in his deliberations; but decided with a promptitude for which he had often been praised by his partners in iniquity.

As soon as he saw his amiable lady, he informed her of Mr. Hamilton's visit, but disguised the motives of it under the most daring falsehood. He represented that gentleman's application to himself as the nefarious trick of an abandoned seducer, who, pleased with the pretty sage of an innocent inexperienced girl, wished to ensnare her by a pretended show of friendship.

'He did not dare to avow his diabolical designs,' said the colonel, 'because he feared I should kick him out of my house: but after having offered to provide for the girl, out of the ample fortune he possesses, he had the effrontery to own, when pressed upon by my questions, that he had no thoughts of marrying her.'

'Good heavens!' exclaimed Lady Maria, 'can it be possible that any one can be so depraved? But how did you treat such a shocking breach of decency?'

'I was greatly incensed,' replied the colonel, 'and after forbidding him the house, I rang the bell, and called for his carriage.'

'Charming,' said Lady Maria; 'and what did he say to that?'

'Oh, he sneaked off without resenting the affront I had offered him. But, my dear Maria, we must take double care of poor Fanny. I wish she had finished her visit at the Marquis of Petersfield's. This is a dangerous fellow; he is certainly the handsomest man I ever saw, and extremely fascinating; and although he is past the bloom of youth, he may be a formidable tempter to the inexperienced Fanny. I really think it would be wise to take her into the country for a little while. Should you have any objection to visiting Pemberton Abbey for a few weeks?'

'Oh, no, I should like it of all things, if you think it necessary,' said Lady Maria.

'It is necessary, you may be sure,' replied the colonel. 'Hamilton will leave no artifice untried to entrap her, you may depend upon that; and the poor girl will be lost before we are aware of his designs. But you must not let Fanny suppose we leave town

on her account, or it is an hundred to one but it will make her unwilling to go.'

'Indeed,' said Lady Maria, 'you are mistaken; I am sure that reason would make her go more readily. You have now alarmed me so truly that I shall be as much on the watch as you are.'

'Fanny is very beautiful; and if such a man as Mr. Hamilton can form such designs against her, what has she not to fear from those of less sober habits, who openly profess to admire her?'

'It is impossible to calculate,' said the colonel; 'and therefore the sooner she goes into the country the better.'

CHAPTER XVII.

A Tete a Tete.

WHEN Lady Maria met Fanny, in the course of that day, she mentioned the circumstances of Mr. Hamilton's visit, and her own and Colonel Ross's alarm upon the subject, adding that it was their decided opinion that her safety depended upon her immediate removal into the country. 'I will accompany you, Fanny,' said the good-natured but weak-minded Lady Maria; 'for surely you cannot object to go.' 'I have not the least objection to leaving town,' said Fanny, laughing, 'but really cannot see any necessity for so doing on Mr. Hamilton's account. I am sure, were I to consult my own inclination, he is one of the last persons I should wish to fly from. There is something so fascinating in his manner, that I feel to love without knowing him: his voice is persuasion itself; I could listen to it for ever.'

'Upon my honour, you astonish and frighten me,' said Lady Maria; 'this must be a most dangerous man indeed. Why, my dear Fanny, you have seen him only once, and he has absolutely turned your head.'

'I beg your ladyship's pardon,' replied Fanny, 'I have seen Mr. Hamilton twice; for he is the very gentleman who rescued me from the impertinence of the man in Hyde Park. I recollect his voice the instant he spoke last night; it seemed to thrill through my very heart.'

'It could not be the same person, my dear,' answered Lady Maria, 'or Colonel Ross would have remembered him; for you know he saw him.' 'I know he did,' rejoined Fanny; 'but, perhaps, he did not make such a strong impression upon the colonel's memory as he did upon mine: it is *impossible* that I should *ever* forget him.'

'Well, upon my honour, Fanny, you talk so strangely, I cannot tell what to make of you; to fall in love with a stranger, and then speak about it as unconcernedly as if there were nothing in it, is so unlike your natural character, that I really do not know my friend Fanny in the picture.'

'I know very little about *love*,' replied Fanny, *nainely*; 'but I do not think what I feel for Mr. Hamilton is what is generally understood by the term *falling in love*. I cannot be said to love a person that I do not know. I am unacquainted with a single virtue that may adorn Mr. Hamilton; I am equally ignorant whether his character is not tarnished by some vice that would disgust me were it known to me. Esteem is, therefore, impossible; and love, in my heart, cannot exist without it; yet am I irresistibly drawn as it were by a secret instinct, which I can neither account for nor describe, to feel interested for this gentleman beyond what I ever before experienced for any mortal.'

'Depend upon it, my dear,' said Lady Maria, 'this man has used some unfair means to engage your affections. I have heard there are *charms* that will take such effect as to render it impossible to escape their witchcraft, and your description of your unaccountable partiality for Mr. Hamilton convinces me that you are under the influence of some demoniac conjuration.'

'Surely, my dear Lady Maria,' said Fanny, 'you cannot be weak enough to believe in witchcraft? I cannot help laughing at such a preposterous idea.'

'You may laugh, if you please,' answered Lady Maria; 'but I shall lose no time in taking you out of town. I vow I shall expect

to see you carried away in a whirlwind, or conveyed up the chimney, if you remain within the circle of this vile necromancer any longer.'

' Nay, my dear friend,' replied Fanny, ' if such be indeed your creed, a removal into the country will avail me but little; a genie so powerful can surely find me in the most sequestered retreat. I am nevertheless ready to accompany your ladyship at the shortest notice.'

When Miss Stanhope was informed of Lady Maria's sudden determination to quit London, and take Fanny with her, she expressed the most violent discontent. It was impossible any longer to carry on the cheat that had hitherto *puzzled* the duke, for he had more than once entertained doubts as to the perfect truth of the story which he at first implicitly believed.

' What can be the meaning of this unaccountable whim?' said that young lady to Fanny: ' is Lady Maria light-headed? or has the colonel some intrigue upon his hands, that he cannot carry on so well while his wife is in town? for I imagine he is not to make one in this Quixotic expedition.'

' I really do not know,' answered Fanny, ' for nothing has been explained to me, excepting what I have told you, that Col. Ross has taken it in his head that Mr. Hamilton is a conjuror, and that I shall be conveyed to some enchanted castle by a touch of his wand, unless I am immediately removed into the country. Lady Maria is a convert to the same opinion, and the result is, I *must* go into the country.'

' Well, my dear,' answered Miss Stanhope, ' if I were you I would please these two fools; I *would* go into the country; but it should not be where they please, but where I liked myself. I will explain myself more fully this evening, if you will come into my dressing-room as soon as we leave the dining parlour. It will be your own fault if you do not show them that you understand *conjuration* as well as they, and know how to get into an enchanted castle without the assistance of Mr. Hamilton.'

Fanny looked surprised. ' What do you mean, Amelia?' said she.

' A riddle you cannot comprehend yet,' replied Miss Stanhope; ' but I tell you it shall be explained to you in the evening. One

thing, however, I will tell you; on the accomplishment of the scheme comprised in that riddle depends my future happiness.'

Fanny in vain entreated Miss Stanhope to explain herself more fully: she would not do it.

'Where is it they are going to take you to, Fanny?' said she, not noticing the questions which had just been asked her.

'Into Yorkshire,' replied her friend. 'Lady Ellincourt gave Colonel Ross and Lady Maria permission to make use of her seat there, whenever they found it agreeable; and I assure you I shall feel great pleasure in revisiting a place where I have spent so many happy days.'

'Why, Pemberton Abbey is an odd place to take you to if they are afraid of Mr. Hamilton. He has a large estate that joins Lady Ellincourt's, which, you know, together with the mansion, was purchased of the gentleman who left the fortune to the *conjuror*, as your *wise ones* call Mr. Hamilton. Apropos, you say he was your champion in Hyde Park, when you were attacked by the Dragon of Wantley. Do you think him handsome?'

'The handsomest man I ever saw,' answered Fanny.

'Hush, my dear; you forget you have seen the Duke of Albermarle. You surely do not think Mr. Hamilton to be compared with the duke.'

'I don't expect *you* should think so,' replied Fanny; 'but you may allow me to prefer Mr. Hamilton to the duke.'

'Prefer him! Why, certainly, you do not like Mr. Hamilton best. I shall believe in the conjuration scheme if you say yes,' interrupted Miss Stanhope.

'Nay, as to *liking* either,' answered Fanny, 'I am not well enough acquainted with them to warrant such an expression; but I certainly know which interests me most.'

'And pray let us hear who that happy creature is,' said Amelia.

'Mr. Hamilton beyond all comparison,' rejoined Fanny; 'and yet I know not why it is so.'

'Sorcery and witchcraft!' exclaimed Amelia. 'Lady Maria is right! Why, my dear, he is an old man compared to you. For heaven's sake don't fall in love with an old man.'

'I am not in love,' answered Fanny, pettishly; 'I hate that word. I tell you, Amelia, I would not marry Mr. Hamilton if he were the emperor of the world.'

' Marry him, indeed! No, I hope you would not think of marrying a man who is old enough to be your father.'

' My father!' ejaculated Fanny; ' sweet words! How does my orphan heart pant to hail that honoured name! Oh, that I had a father! that Mr. Hamilton were my father!'

' Now, that's a good girl,' said Miss Stanhope, ' that's an excellent thought. I dare say Mr. Hamilton is your father; and that accounts for the wonderful sympathy between you. You are a foundling, you know.'

' But Mr. Hamilton is a Creole, is he not?' said Fanny, who caught eagerly at the suggestion so lightly made by her giddy friend. ' Mr. Hamilton is a Creole, and never was in England till now.'

' Oh, never mind that,' rejoined Amelia, ' inconsistencies are nothing in a *novel*. You were sent over in a *hamper* to be educated in England; and then he forgot to inquire where they had placed you, and so you came to be lost.'

Fanny's countenance fell when she perceived, by this speech, that Miss Stanhope had no serious idea of the probability she had suggested. ' Alas!' thought she, ' Amelia is surrounded by affluence, and feels not, as I do, the mortifying circumstance of dependence. She is an orphan, but not an indigent one. It is not, however, Mr. Hamilton's riches I sigh for; the sacred title of father would be equally dear to my heart, were it accompanied by poverty. To be hailed by the endearing name of child—to be pressed to the paternal bosom of a virtuous parent, and find, within the circle of a father's arms, a safe asylum from the persecutions of a cruel world—this is what I wish for; and gladly would I embrace obscurity and indigence, were those the terms on which alone I could obtain that fondly wished-for blessing!'

' I dare say it would be mighty *pathetic*,' said Amelia, ' if one could read all that is passing in that serious *head*, just now. But cheer up, child; the naughty conjurors shall not have you, nor the anti-conjurors either, for I mean to dispose of you myself in the prettiest way imaginable. Your romantic story shall have such a charming termination, that all the booksellers shall be giving it to the novel writers for a subject. I intend writing a poem upon it myself. I shall choose Scott's style; that irregular metre will suit my whimsical fancy exactly.'

‘It is a happy thing,’ said Fanny, with a sigh, ‘that you have got me for a butt.’

‘Nay, my dear,’ said Miss Stanhope, ‘it will be your turn soon; and then, if you don’t make a butt of me it will be your own fault. There is the first bell; make haste to your toilet; and if you of Thomson’s opinion on the subject of unadorned beauty, make yourself as killing as possible. Your good looks will not be wasted.’

‘Who is coming to dine here?’ asked Fanny.

‘Several gentlemen, and *perhaps* Mr. Hamilton.’

‘Pho!’ cried Fanny, ‘you only say that to tease me.’

‘Upon my honour I should not be surprised if he were,’ replied Miss Stanhope; ‘for I heard Lord Cheviotdale praising Mr. Hamilton to the marquis; and the latter said he would get acquainted with him. And should that be the case, I will ask him to give you away when you are married, and then he *will* be your father.’

‘Giddy girl!’ exclaimed Fanny, as she left the room. ‘Will there ever come a time that you will be serious?’

‘Oh, yes, my dear; when I am *married*.’

CHAPTER XVIII.

◆◆◆

A Dilemma.

WHEN Fanny entered the dining parlour, the company were just seating themselves; for her long conversation with Amelia had made her too late at her toilet.

The Duke of Albemarle took her hand as she approached the table, and led her to the chair next Miss Stanhope’s, and immediately seated himself beside her.

‘Your lovely friend,’ said his grace, addressing Fanny in a low

voice, 'has given me permission to assume the character of your *Cicesbeo*. Tell me, madam, has that grant your sanction?'

'It is an honour to which I am by no means entitled,' replied Fanny, blushing excessively.

'It will confer an honour upon me,' rejoined the duke, 'more highly valued than any other *can be*. Say then, lovely Miss *Stanhope*, that you do not forbid the presumption.'

'Your grace mistakes the person you are speaking to,' replied Fanny, 'and you render my situation distressing beyond expression.'

'Heaven forbid!' exclaimed the duke. 'I will be silent *now*; but the moment approaches which must dissipate this cloud of error.'

The whole of this conversation had passed in a whisper, and unheard by the surrounding guests; but the duke's marked attention to Fanny had not passed unnoticed by several ladies who sat near the marchioness, and who observed, 'that it really was too bad to begin *flirting before marriage*, close to his bride's elbow too. But, no doubt, the *forwardness* of the *girl* was the cause of such strange behaviour.' Poor Fanny, in the mean time, sat the very picture of confusion and embarrassment, totally at a loss to understand the duke's enigmatical address to her.

She waited the moment of withdrawing from table, with an impatience so painfully exquisite, that she could not command presence of mind enough to reply collectively to the little nothings which were said to her by the ephemera about her.

Miss *Stanhope*, with her usual giddiness, enjoyed her confusion, and added considerably to it, by remarking to the duke, 'that she really believed he was an arrant thief.'

'A thief?' re-echoed his grace; 'pray, ma'am, explain yourself.'

'Nay, appearances are strong against your grace, I assure you. Fanny was in full possession of all her faculties about ten minutes before she entered this room, and it is plain she has lost her recollection, and the use of her tongue, since she sat by you; what, therefore, can be inferred, but that you have stole them?'

Before the duke could reply to this mad speech the marchioness rose to quit the table, and Fanny was released from her uncomfortable situation.

On retiring to the drawing-room, Miss Stanhope reminded Fanny of her engagement.

'Come,' said she, offering her arm, 'you know we have an explanation. I thought you would be dying for it. I did not expect to be obliged to remind you of it.'

'Indeed,' replied Fanny, 'you talk to me in such a wild strain, that I place no confidence in any thing you say.'

'Thank you, my dear, you are vastly polite, I must confess; nevertheless I excuse you, because I can feel for you just now: there does appear a mystery, certainly.'

By this time they had reached Miss Stanhope's dressing-room, which had been fitted up for the reception of her morning visitors, and was an elegant apartment on the first floor, with folding doors that opened upon a terrace in the gardens of Petersfield House. The weather being warm, these doors were thrown open, and Amelia seated herself upon a sofa that stood on the outside, and placing Fanny beside her, began her promised explanation in the following words :

'I know,' said she, 'what you will say to me for the prank I have played you: but as I lose a lover, and you gain a coronet by it, I think you have not much cause to be angry. In the first place, then, I must tell you, that I never could endure the idea of marrying the Duke of Albemarle from the first time I ever heard the alliance talked of, and that is as long ago as I can remember any thing. An antipathy so deeply rooted, and of such long standing, is not easily conquered; and I have always been beating my brains to imagine some quaint device to get rid of the match, and yet preserve my fortune, which I had always been told must be the forfeit of my refusal of the duke's hand. My imagination was not, however, sufficiently fertile to supply any scheme that appeared practicable, until the lucky hour in which your accident introduced you to my intended husband. He saw and admired you, and I was sufficiently clear-sighted to penetrate the secret in an instant; and with the ability of a skilful general, I lost no time in arranging my plan of attack, and so scientifically did I manoeuvre, that I made you both prisoners without your even suspecting an ambush. — I should feel more vain of my skill in tactics if it were not for this one recollection; I believe my wits had been sharpened a

little while before, by a discovery that made prompt measures indispensable. I had found out that I not only detested the idea of marrying the duke, but that there was a being in existence for whom I felt no such antipathy, and whose wife I had rather be than the empress of the modern Alexander himself. My fortune was now become of greater value in my eyes, because I thought it would be acceptable to the man of my choice; and I determined, if possible, to make the duke the transgressor, and thus insure the possession of it to him.

The scheme succeeded beyond my expectations; more, I believe, owing to the love-sick blindness of the duke than any great ingenuity of mine. I know the world well enough, inexperienced as I am, to feel sure that my fortune and the engagement that seemed to exist between the Duke of Albemarle and myself, would act as powerful checks to the encouragement of a mere romantic passion conceived in the warmth of youthful effervescence. That the duke should admire you, nay, absolutely love you, I knew to be both possible and even likely to happen; but that he should fly in the face of prudence, and determine to fight the Son of Grumbo his uncle, to obtain you, I thought rather to be wished than attained. I therefore laid a trap for his prudence, and baited it with a savoury scrap of plausibility, and had soon the unspeakable satisfaction of seeing my silly mouse caught, beyond the possibility of an escape. I made up a serious face, the first time we met after the accident, and assured him with a great show of truth that you were Miss Stanhope, and that you had prevailed upon me to assume your name and character, under the romantic hope of obtaining his grace's affections for the sake of pure merit and disinterested love. I added, that Lord Somertown was a party in the trick, and that nothing would please his uncle so well as to see him take notice of the real heiress, in her disguise, although his outward carriage would imply resentment. Perhaps, had the duke been less enamoured, he would have been more clear-sighted; be that as it may, he was caught by the artifice, and believed every thing I said. Your being here, on a visit, favoured the deceit; and the consequence is, that the poor swain is too far gone in the tender passion to recede, although he is informed that he has an explanation to expect, that will place the disinterestedness of

his passion at issue. We shall see how he will behave, when I confess the whole trick. If he continues faithful, I shall esteem him; if otherwise, I shall despise, and will take care to be even with him.'

CHAPTER XIX.

Astonishment.

'**Y**ou have elucidated a mystery,' said Fanny, 'that has tormented me a long time; but I cannot say you have done it in a satisfactory manner. Your artifice can answer no purpose whatever but to exasperate your guardians, disgust the duke, and render me ridiculous, or even more than ridiculous; for it will be supposed that *I* had some part in the plot: and rest assured, if that be the case, it will make me more wretched than any other circumstance possibly could.'

'Never fear, my dear Fanny,' replied Miss Stanhope, 'the duke is too far gone to think about prudence now. I have watched him; and I am sure he would as soon part with his life as with the hope of marrying you. As I said before, had he known who you were at first, he might have consulted prudence, and avoided the society of a person so dangerous to his peace; but now it is too late. He has had frequent opportunities of observing that your beauty is the least part of your powers of pleasing; and he has expressed himself to me in rapturous terms of those mental charms that are to form the happiness of his future life, when he is united to "the most lovely of women." Those are his own words.—When people have imagined the duke was making love to me, he was entertaining me with *your* praises, little madam. Am I not a good girl to listen to them without envy? and from the mouth of a lover too!'

'You have done me an irreparable injury,' replied Fanny, 'by

making me act a part in this drama, although without my concurrence.'

'How so?' asked Miss Stanhope: 'surely it is no injury to lay a plan for making you a dutchess!'

'You do not think becoming the Dutchess of Albemarle comprises much happiness,' said Fanny, 'or you would not reject the offer yourself.'

'You are pleased to be sharp upon me,' answered her friend; 'but you ought to recollect, my dear, that *I* don't *like* the duke.'

'Neither do I,' rejoined Fanny. 'By your own confession, you acknowledge that had his grace known me to be the portionless creature I am, his *prudence* would have taught him to avoid me; and yet you suppose me mean enough to take advantage of the infatuation of his senses, which, by the by, I do not believe in, and become a dutchess at the expense of my delicacy.'

'Your silly scruples about delicacy and nonsense will ruin every thing,' said Miss Stanhope, in an angry tone. 'These high-flown romantic notions do very well in the heroine of a novel, but positively they have not common sense in the straight forward every-day occurrences of life. Surely to a girl who has no dependance but on the bounty of her friends, the opportunity of marrying so advantageously ought not to be slighted.'

'Your ideas and mine are very different upon this subject,' replied Fanny, indignantly. 'Nothing ought to be considered advantageous to a woman that militates against her delicacy; and *poor* and *dependant* as I am, I would not abate one single grain of that nice feeling to become an *empress*. These are my sentiments; and I trust, now you know them, you will at least respect me so far as to forbear mentioning the subject to me any more.'

'I have done,' replied Miss Stanhope, laughing; 'but here comes one to whom the interdiction does not extend, I hope.'

As she spoke the Duke of Albemarle entered from the garden.

'I am punctual,' said he, looking at his watch, and addressing Miss Stanhope. 'Tell me, my charming friend, that I am welcome.'

'To me most welcome,' replied she, 'but for that young lady, (pointing to Fanny,) I cannot answer so well as I flattered myself I could.'

'The visit of the Duke of Albemarle to Miss Stanhope can want no concurrence of mine,' said Fanny; 'I will therefore retire.'

The duke seized both Fanny's hands as she rose from her chair, and made a motion to go.

'No, by heavens!' said he, 'I have suffered suspense too long; you shall not now leave me, lovely incomprehensible, until an explanation has taken place between us.'

'That is right,' said Miss Stanhope; 'she has forbidden me to speak to her again upon the subject, but your grace is a privileged person.'

'Would to heaven I were so!' rejoined the duke.

'Your grace requires an explanation of me,' said Fanny, blushing, 'whilst I am unconscious how it is possible that I should have one to give you. There has been nothing mysterious in any part of my conduct since I have had the honour of being known to your grace.'

'Good heavens!' exclaimed the duke, turning to Miss Stanhope, 'what can this mean?'

'In pity to you both,' replied that giddy girl, 'I will do more than the laws of the land require of any body, i. e. I will accuse myself.' She then recapitulated the particulars relating to her plot, already known; adding, with a laugh, 'Like all other busy-bodies, I have got myself into the worst scrape after all, and am likely to be thanked by nobody at last; for if your grace be but as angry with me as my friend Fanny, I have made a blessed piece of work of it indeed!'

'I must express my concern,' said the duke, 'that Miss Stanhope should have so far mistaken my character, as to suppose any deceit necessary to induce me to act towards her with the liberality she is so justly entitled to. Had I been aware of your plot, it would have saved me much pain, as I should not have told my uncle that Miss Stanhope was the choice of my heart, and the arbitress of my happiness.—This lady,' turning to Fanny, 'has made it impossible for me to offer to any other woman the heart which is hers alone, and which, henceforward, depends for happiness upon her acceptance, or refusal of its devotion. But you, Miss Stanhope, who know Lord Somertown so well, must be aware how difficult you have rendered the task of breaking to him a cir-

circumstance so opposite to his views and wishes, and of which he has not the most distant suspicion.'

'On my account, my lord,' said Fanny, 'I trust you will not incur any displeasure from your uncle, since, however highly honoured by your grace's notice, I am so circumstanced that it is utterly impossible for me to listen to your addresses. My presence here is no longer necessary, as the mystery of which you complained has been unravelled; and if you entertained any doubt of my sentiments, I trust they are for ever removed.' So saying, without giving the duke time to answer her, and before Miss Stanhope was aware of her intentions, Fanny darted out of the room, and left her two auditors in a frame of mind not very agreeable to themselves.

CHAPTER XX.

Reparation.

'WHAT an unaccountable creature that girl is!' exclaimed Miss Stanhope, as Fanny left the room. 'Who would have supposed a dependant creature like her possessed such a lofty spirit?'

'I should,' replied the duke; 'and if you had thought me worthy of your confidence, Miss Stanhope, I would have shown you the fallacy of such an experiment with a girl like Fanny. Good heavens! that I should only be made acquainted with her worth, to lament the impossibility of possessing her.' You have ruined me, Amélia; for ever destroyed my peace of mind, and exposed me to the vindictive spirit of Lord Somertown, without obtaining one advantage yourself. Had you candidly told me, at our first meeting, that you were averse to the alliance, I should not have led my uncle into the error that will render his wrath a thousand times more fierce when he finds that he has been deceived. And

who knows? perhaps the lovely and innocent object of my affection may be the sacrifice first immolated upon the altar of revenge.—Alas! I know my uncle too well to trust him with the fatal secret, unless I were willing to devote the lovely Fanny to the dire consequences of his resentment.'

'Upon my honour, you frighten me,' said Miss Stanhope, turning pale; 'what a marplot I am! I will never attempt scheming again. Well, I will do all I can to repair the injury; the secret must be faithfully kept, and trust to me for the *denouement*. It shall be a happy one; that is, unless Fanny be perverse.'

'Forgive me,' said the duke, 'but you have shown yourself so unskilful at plotting, that I do not like to trust you without knowing what your intentions are; for if the secret be kept, and every thing go on as usual, I see no possibility of avoiding the worst of all *denouements*—our ill-starred nuptials.'

'Well, to be sure, you are the politest creature that ever lived, to tell a lady to her face that the worst thing that could befall you would be to marry her; but I must take it for my pains, for I have deserved it; so now I will retaliate, that is the only satisfaction left me. There cannot exist a greater antipathy on your side to the alliance than that cherished in my heart, an antipathy which is strengthened and increased by an attachment to another person. It was the hope of making you the aggressor, in breaking off the treaty of marriage, that led me to the stratagem which has so completely failed; as thereby I hoped to escape the penalty attached to the delinquency, not that I intended to take the forfeit-money from you, but merely to save my own. This mercenary view induced me to quit the path of truth, and wander in the trackless maze of cunning; but now I renounce the paltry scheme, and regardless of fortune, or any other consideration, have resolved to make reparation for the error I have committed; leave it therefore to me, and fearlessly pursue your accustomed attention; and proceed with the preparations for our expected nuptials, I will take care to render them impossible. And to free you from the shadow of blame, I will not tell you my plan, because I have set my heart upon a surprise; but I repeat, you may safely trust me. I am now treading in the plain open path of generosity, of honour, and can say with truth, that I am now *en pays de connoissance*; it was only

in the region of cunning that I lost myself, for *there* I was a stranger.'

'I will trust you,' said the duke, 'although you have so cruelly misled me, for it is impossible to doubt the candid tale you tell; but remember, I will not dishonour my name, nor be stigmatized with the imputation of dishonourable dealing; therefore, if I follow your directions, and go on with the *appearance* of a courtship, our marriage is inevitable, unless *you* prevent it; for *I* will not act like a scoundrel, though *death* were the alternative!

'Fear me not,' answered Amelia; 'here is my hand as a pledge of my fidelity. I will not foil you. But lest the slightest idea of collusion should attach to you, from this minute we drop the subject until it be finally decided; so now go about your business, and I will seek Fanny, and try to soothe her ruffled spirit. She is a haughty little puss: I believe her heart is lined with buckram.'

'Do not irritate her feelings, I entreat you,' said the duke; 'she is exquisitely sensitive; and should she imbibe an idea that I presumed upon the knowledge of her dependant situation, she will be lost for ever to me. You owe me this complaisance, my dear Miss Stanhope, for you have placed my happiness upon a balance.'

'I will attend to what you say,' answered Amelia, 'therefore make yourself easy.'

The duke now retired, and Amelia went to look for Fanny. She found her in her own apartment, whither she had fled when she quitted Miss Stanhope's dressing-room. A torrent of tears had relieved the oppressed feelings of her heart, and she was now more composed.

Fanny's spirit was naturally noble, and rose superior to the dependence of her situation. Whilst under the protection of Lady Ellincourt, she had not felt the mortifications to which her ladyship's absence had now so painfully exposed her. Instead, however, of becoming servile, or endeavouring to conciliate the regards of her haughty companions, by that unvarying complaisance which generally distinguishes the humble companion, Fanny had become more reserved, and assumed an air of dignity, which consciousness of innate worth could alone have supported. The Duke of Albermarle had appeared in her eyes exactly the sort of man she would have chosen, had she been entitled by rank or fortune to encou-

rage his addresses ; yet, notwithstanding this predilection in his favour, she had persevered in receiving his attentions with a degree of coldness that would have convinced him she was entirely averse to him, had he not been encouraged to persist by Miss Stanhope's assurances that it was merely the effect of a romantic determination to prove the sincerity of his passion to the utmost. The discovery of the deceit that had been practised, under the sanction of her name, gave Fanny the most poignant regret, as the same delicate spirit that had made her veil her real sentiments, under the appearance of indifference, whilst uncertain of his intentions, now sternly forbade the humiliation of marrying, clandestinely, the man who had been led to suppose she had laid a trap to ensnare his affections, and whose superiority of rank and fortune might fully justify a suspicion that ambition was the chief inducement.

‘Never !’ said the noble-minded girl, as she quitted Miss Stanhope’s apartment, ‘never could I receive the addresses of a man whose confidence in my integrity had been destroyed by the implication of artifice upon my character. No, generous Albemarle, I can now never listen to your vows ; and although my heart overflows with grateful tenderness for the partiality you have honoured me with, the die is cast, and I can never be yours. Doomed to conceal within the aching boundary of my own bosom the sorrow that consumes me, I shall gladly retire into the country, where at least the restraint that now holds every feature in bondage may be dispensed with, and I may weep unquestioned and alone !’

Such was the soliloquy that had employed the mind of Fanny, before Amelia came to disturb her. The lively girl began to rally her pensive friend with her usual vivacity, and made use of every argument her ingenuity could supply her with, to prove that she ought to receive the duke’s addresses with complacency, although she could not deny that for the present, at least, those addresses must be *clandestine*.

‘Enough, my dear Amelia,’ interrupted Fanny, ‘that single proposition overturns your argument ; nothing clandestine *can* be right. This excellent maxim I owe to my beloved, my lamented Lady Ellineourt—I say lamented, because some secret intelligence seems to assure me that I shall see her no more. If the duke is

ashamed to acknowledge me as the object of his choice, I should be equally ashamed to be a party in so mean a connection. Nothing, surely, can degrade a woman more than receiving the clandestine addresses of a lover; and if he be greatly her superior, she incurs the odium of imposing upon his weakness. I entreat you will never name the subject to me again, for I would not wed with *royalty* upon such mortifying terms. To-morrow I shall return to Col. Ross's to propose for my journey; when you wish to see me, you will favour me with your company there. I shall not, therefore, be obliged to meet the duke, who I trust will soon forget me; and depend upon it, I will make every effort in my power to efface his image from my mind.'

'It will require some *effort*, then,' said Amelia, archly. 'I am glad, however, to hear that, and I will take care to report it to my *client* by way of a cordial.'

'If you value my peace of mind, you will never name me to your *client* again,' said Fanny; 'but whether you do or not, my resolution will remain unshaken. But come, let us return to the company, where, no doubt, our absence has been noticed.'

'Oh, no doubt,' replied Amelia, 'such charming creatures as we are must be *missed*, so *allons*,' and she took Fanny's arm, and led the way to the drawing-room. As soon as they entered, the Marchioness of Petersfield called Miss Stanhope to her; 'Amelia,' said she, 'we are going to the Opera, will you go?'

'I never thought about it,' said Miss Stanhope; 'what occasions this sudden resolution? You did not intend it before dinner.'

'Oh, no,' replied the marchioness, 'but the Marquis of Cheviotdale has been teasing me into the scheme. I had lent my box to Lady Maria Bouverie, but she has just sent word that she cannot use it, as her eldest son is very ill. Lord Cheviotdale and all heard me read the note to Maria, and he has been almost upon his knees to me to persuade me to go. He says this new Opera is the most divine thing; and as a further inducement, he has promised to introduce the *interesting Creole* to us; and every body is making such a fuss about him, that positively it is quite a bore not to know him.'

'And who, in the name of wonder, is the *interesting Creole*?'

said Miss Stanhope. 'I am an enthusiast about *interesting* people; do tell me his name. Is he young ?'

'His name is Hamilton; he is not young, but he is the most beautiful creature that ever was seen. Lord Cheviotdale says, the ladies are positively dying for him by hundreds.'

'Then I pity them,' rejoined Amelia, 'for it is labour in vain for them to fall in love with him, if he be the rich Mr. Hamilton.'

'He is indeed the *rich* Mr. Hamilton in the vocabulary of the votaries of *Plutus*; but he is the *handsome* Mr. Hamilton, and the *interesting* *Creole*, with the ladies,' answered the marchioness; 'so you *must* go. But apropos, you spoke as if you were acquainted with him just now; do you know any of his history? They say it is a most extraordinary one.'

'What *I* know about him,' answered Amelia, 'has nothing extraordinary in it; it is the most natural thing in the world; he has fallen in love with a young girl, and old bachelors are very apt to do that.'

'Who is she? what young girl do you mean?' was vociferated from two or three voices at once.

'I will not tell you,' answered Amelia, laughing; 'if we all go to the Opera you will soon see.'

'You must persuade Maria, then,' said the marchioness, 'for she seems averse to the proposal.'

Lady Maria was on the other side of the room whilst they had been talking of Mr. Hamilton, and had heard nothing of the conversation. Miss Stanhope went to her, and endeavoured to persuade her to go to the Opera.

'No,' replied her ladyship, 'I am going home, and Fanny has just been so kind as to promise to go with me; her visit has surely been long enough here.'

'Your ladyship must excuse me there,' said Amelia; 'you are going to run away with Fanny into the country, and that is bad enough, for you know I can hardly live without her; but positively you shall not take her to-night. I will not go to the Opera without she goes.'

'Now, Fanny, would not you like to go to the Opera?'

'I am very fond of the Opera,' answered Fanny, 'but I have promised Lady Maria to return with her.'

'Well, then, you must break your promise, that is all I know,' interrupted Miss Stanhope; 'for a silly vow is better broken than kept.'

'I will not break my promise,' replied Fanny, 'for I never do; but if Lady Maria likes to release me, that is a different thing.'

'Lady Maria *will* release you; she *must*,' said Amelia; 'for I am determined to have my own way as long as I can. I am going to be married, and then I shall never have it I suppose.'

Lady Maria laughed. 'You are a wild creature,' said her ladyship, 'and do just what you please with every body. I believe I shall go to the Opera myself to accommodate you.'

'That's a divine creature! now I love you,' rejoined Miss Stanhope. 'Come, Fanny, (turning to her pensive friend,) let us go and put a little more brilliancy on our heads; the simple costume in which they are now dressed will not do for the Opera. I intend to be very killing. Perhaps you may think you can do mischief enough without the foreign aid of ornament, but I am not so vain.'

'Don't be long at your toilet,' said the marchioness, as Amelia and Fanny left the room, 'we are going to have tea directly.'

As soon as they were gone, 'What a ridiculous fuss is made about that girl! I am positively sick of it,' said the marchioness, 'Miss Stanhope's regard for her is quite infatuation.'

'Fanny is a very good girl,' said Lady Maria, 'but I really do wonder sometimes myself, what people see in her, to be so violently enchanted.'

'When do the Ellincourts come home?' asked a lady who sat by.

'I don't know, indeed,' answered Lady Maria; 'I wish they were come, for I grow quite uneasy about my charge.'

'How so?' said the marchioness, 'I thought you said she was a very good girl.'

'So she is,' replied Lady Maria: 'but I am afraid somebody will run away with her; Colonel Ross says there are so many people in love with her.'

The ladies laughed. 'Oh never fear,' said one of them, 'pretty girls are not scarce enough to tempt men to much risk to obtain one!—Don't some people say she is the daughter of Lord E. by that Italian mistress he kept?'

'Oh dear no,' answered another, 'she is not Lord Ellincourt's

daughter, she is too old for that; but I have heard Lady Ellincourt was afraid she would be *her* daughter, for Lord Ellincourt was crazy about *her*, and would certainly have married her, if his mother had not made him go abroad.'

'Lord Ellincourt is safe now,' said a third, 'for he is married to a lady of very large fortune.'

'I know her very well,' said the marchioness, 'she was a school-fellow of Maria's, a poor stupid thing as ever lived, *pretending* to be so good and so gentle, that she was just like a Methodist. She was as fond of this Fanny, before she went abroad, as Miss Stanhope, but had not so spirit a way of showing it.'

'Whither is your ladyship going into the country?' said the lady that spoke first, addressing Lady Maria.

'We are going to Pemberton Abbey; Lady Ellincourt gave us leave to make what use we pleased of it in her absence; and the colonel seems to wish me to stay there the few months he intends being in Ireland.'

'Is the colonel going to Ireland directly?'

'Oh no, he intends remaining at Pemberton Abbey for three weeks or a month, and then going back with Lord Ballafyn, who is now in England, and returns to Ireland at that time.'

'Is Pemberton Abbey a pretty place?'

'I really don't know, for I was never there; but Fanny speaks of it in raptures,' said Lady Maria.

'It was part of the rich Hamilton's estate,' said the talkative lady; 'at least I believe so. I think Lady Ellincourt said she bought it of Mr. Hamilton's executors. I don't mean the Mr. Hamilton we were talking of just now, because you know he is alive; but he only inherited as legatee. He was no relation to the old gentleman, I understand. Did your ladyship ever hear why old Mr. Hamilton went abroad?'

'Never,' answered Lady Maria. 'I did hear Lady Ellincourt say there was some melancholy cause; but as I hate sad stories, I never asked any questions: was it any thing very shocking?'

'Oh, yes! he had only one child, and that was a son; but he was *lost* when he was just come of age, and never heard of since.'

'Surely,' exclaimed Lady Maria, 'that must be impossible;

how could a young man of that age be lost, unless indeed it was at sea ?'

' Oh, no, it was not at sea : he was one of the finest young men that ever was seen, and every body loved him that knew him ; poor Mr. Hamilton perfectly idolized him. It is a great many years ago. I am ashamed to say I remember it, for it makes one appear so shockingly old ; but I really do. O dear ! there was nothing else talked of at the time ; and some thought one thing, and some thought another ; but nothing ever came out. And it hurt poor old Hamilton so much, that he went abroad, and would never come home again ; and he died in the West Indies, I believe.'

' What a very extraordinary story ! ' said Lady Maria. ' But how came the old gentleman to give his money to this Mr. Hamilton, if he is no relation to him ? '

' Indeed, my dear, I don't know ; but I suppose he met with him when he was just going into his dotage, and he played his cards well, and got on the weak side of the old man. I hear this Hamilton is very clever.'

' As he is of the same name, I should suppose,' said Lady Maria, ' that he pretended to be related to the Hamilton family.'

' Oh, no, my dear, he took the name of Hamilton for the estates ; he is a Creole, they say, and was never in England till now.'

' How long ago is it since the son disappeared ? ' said Lady Maria.

' My dear creature, what a shocking question, when I have just told you, *I* recollect the circumstance. But, however, I may as well tell you ; it is nineteen years ago ; I was then just a bride. Dear me, it seems only yesterday ! — Have you heard that Mr. H. is going to be married ? '

' I know nothing about it,' said Lady Maria, with an air of ennui ; for Mrs. Ellis had tired her with her circumstantial narrative. The entrance of Miss Stanhope and Fanny put an end to the conversation ; and as soon as tea was over, the whole party adjourned to the Opera, attended by the Duke of Albemarle, the Marquises of Petersfield and Cheviotdale, and Col. Ross.

CHAPTER XXI.

*The Concert.*

THE two ladies who accompanied the Marchioness of Petersfield's family party to the Opera, had a box adjoining her ladyship's, and as that could boast a better view of the stage, Miss Stanhope accepted their offer of sitting there in preference to the marchioness's; and as she was known to be inseparable from Fanny, a seat was also offered to her.

The first act was nearly over when they entered the house, and the first object that struck Fanny, on her entrance, was Mr. Hamilton sitting in the pit with his arms folded across his breast, and his eyes pensively fixed upon the part of the house where their box was situated. He instantly recognised Fanny, and rising from his seat, made her a low bow. Confused beyond measure at this public salute, the deepest crimson covered her cheeks; but she, nevertheless, returned the compliment by a slight inclination of the head.

This did not pass unobserved by Col. Ross, who was in the back part of the box, talking to Lord Cheviotdale, and exclaimed in the first ebullition of fury, 'Curse the fellow!' Colonel Ross was unconscious that he had spoken aloud, until Lord Cheviotdale, whose eyes had followed the colonel's, as it glanced at the object of his anger, asked him with surprise, if he meant Mr. Hamilton. 'But,' added his lordship, recollecting himself, 'that is impossible, for every body that knows Mr. Hamilton likes him.'

'I know very little of that gentleman,' said the colonel, 'nor do I wish to increase the acquaintance, for he resembles a person I detest; and it was that likeness which forced from my lips the apostrophe that surprised you.'

'By heaven!' rejoined Lord Cheviotdale, 'if Hamilton be like any body who is unamiable, it can be only an *exterior* resem-

blance; therefore, to do away such unjust prejudices, I shall immediately fetch him hither, and I will bet ten thousand pounds you recant your unfavourable opinion in half an hour afterwards.'

The marquis did not wait for Colonel Ross to answer; but, quitting the box, made his way into the pit, and returned in a very few minutes, accompanied by Mr. Hamilton.

'I have fulfilled my promise,' said his lordship, addressing the Marchioness of Petersfield; 'here is Mr. Hamilton, drawn hither by the ardent desire he feels to be introduced to your ladyship.'

The marchioness put on one of her most gracious looks, and replied, 'that she should esteem herself happy in the honour of Mr. Hamilton's acquaintance.'

Col. Ross bit his lip, and received his share of the introductory ceremony with stiff politeness.

Miss Stanhope looked at Lord Cheviotdale with an air of reprobation, who instantly understood the hint, and whispering to Mr. Hamilton, led him into the adjoining box, where he renewed the ceremony of introduction, both to Miss Stanhope and her friend.

The ladies who were in the same box were acquainted with Mr. Hamilton, and gave him so cordial a reception that he accepted their invitation to take a seat in their box, and placing himself behind Fanny, he addressed the chief part of his conversation to her and Miss Stanhope, whose lively sallies seemed to please him much, and often awakened a sweet smile upon his pensive countenance.

There was solid sense in every thing Mr. Hamilton said; and he expressed himself in such elegant language that Fanny listened to him with delight, whilst her soft eyes beamed upon him a look of the sweetest complacency.

The Duke of Albemarle, who was in the box adjoining, had watched Fanny with all the tortures of jealousy, from the first moment of Mr. Hamilton's introduction; and when he read upon her intelligent countenance such unequivocal proofs of her admiration of the man he deemed his rival, he could scarce rein in his rage and indignation.

Alarmed lest his emotions should betray him, he left the box, and endeavoured to recover his self-command by a walk in the adjoining corridor.

Sir Everard Mornington was at the 'Opera that evening, and as soon as he espied Miss Stanhope he hastened to join her party.

Sir Everard was one of those lively people who are at home every where, and acquainted with every body ; he entered the box therefore without ceremony, and after a slight nod, and ' *How do,*' to Amelia, he began a long story to one of the old ladies, about a narrow escape he had experienced in the morning, having been thrown out of a dog-cart tandem which he was driving, to the imminent risk of his own neck, and the total demolition of the poor woman's wheelbarrow that had caused the accident, by crossing the street just at the moment young *Jeju* was driving down Bond Street, in the true style of *prime and bang-up !*

' Good heavens !' said Miss Stanhope, ' you talk so shockingly, that positively I shall be nervous whenever I see any body driving tandem or four-in-hand again.'

' Don't alarm yourself,' replied her lover, ' there is nothing so delightful to a man of spirit as a hair-breadth escape now and then ; it gives them *eclat*. Now this accident will be in all the papers, and I shall be the topic of conversation for these *three* days. I wish I had broken my collar-bone, or dislocated my arm, or some snug little accident ; that would have been *prime*, for there must have been a *bulletin*, and all my friends, or at least my *soi-disant* friends, *must* have been *very sorry*, whether they would or not.'

Miss Stanhope laughed. ' You are the first person,' said she, ' I ever heard wish to break his bones, or dislocate his joints, for the sake of notoriety ; and I think, as you are so ambitious of fame, you had better join the army in Portugal, and there you may stand a fair chance of having your head taken off in a celebrated manner by a cannon-ball, or of losing some of your limbs at least.'

' Losing a *limb* or so might be *very well*, if it happened in England ; but as to the *head*,' replied Sir Everard, ' the loss of *that* would *spoil* all, for there would be no occasion for a *bulletin*. And as services abroad are equally preclusive of that delightful oblation to vanity, I will serve my country at *home*, by encouraging its breed of horses, employing its mechanics in building carriages, and gratifying the most beautiful part of its population by sporting my elegant figure in all the paraphernalia of a modern son of the whip. When encouraged by their approving glances, I become invincible

to the dangers of my elevated station, and squaring my elbows, I handle the ribbons, and *tip my tits* in their traces such a *dasher*, that we are prime and bang-up beyond all competition.'

Miss Stanhope was not deficient in sense, and yet she was charmed with a jargon that had not a particle of that quality to boast of.

There is no accounting for partialities between the sexes, as it may very frequently be observed that persons of the most opposite tastes and propensities will select each other, and consider it indispensable to their mutual happiness to be united.

The brilliant alliance which fortune seemed to offer her in her union with the duke, had no attraction in her eyes; nor could his grace's elegant person, his fine understanding, nor the fascination of his manners, tempt her for a moment to forego her choice.

Sir Everard Mornington was a fine healthy-looking young man, and might perhaps have displayed something like a *mind*, had studying been the fashion instead of driving; but the company he had been obliged to keep, in order to attain any degree of perfection in the science he was ambitious to shine in, had as completely vulgarised his ideas, as the quaint dress of the natty coachman had disfigured his naturally fine person.

Yet still in Miss Stanhope's eyes he was all perfection; and as she was no less agreeable to him, there had been an explanation between them that had developed their views to each other.

A clandestine marriage had been decided on, and the giddy couple anticipated with delight the noise their elopement would make in the great world.

Sir Everard was rich, and therefore Miss Stanhope's fortune was not his object in addressing her; and when she explained to him the clause in her father's will, which made her fortune the penalty of her refusing to marry the Duke of Albemarle, he laughed, and told her, 'he thought it would be prime to *tip* the *knowing ones* the *go-by*, and show them they had more spirit than to mind what old musty parchments said, that helped to do the mischief the old quizzes that made them could not live to finish.'

But to return to the Opera House. Mr. Hamilton, in the course of the conversation, learned that Fanny was going out of town; and when Miss Stanhope named Lady Ellincourt's seat in Yorkshire,

he clapped his hand to his forehead, and exclaimed, 'Heavens, what a circumstance !'

'Do you know that part of the world?' said Miss Stanhope, whose curiosity had been raised by the exclamation.

'Know it!' rejoined Mr. Hamilton, 'Oh, would to God I had never known it!'

Miss Stanhope was alarmed, for she thought Mr. Hamilton was insane, as his eyes rolled for several minutes with a wildness truly terrific. 'I thought,' said she, endeavouring to turn the conversation, 'that you were a stranger in this country, sir; and had been in England only a few months.'

'Most true,' replied Mr. Hamilton, seeming to recover himself a little, 'I am a stranger in this country; I have no *existence here*. But I am trespassing on your attention, ladies,' continued he, turning to Miss Stanhope and Fanny, 'whilst more pleasing objects demand it. The name of the estate that formerly belonged to my deceased friend, awakened ideas most painful to recal; but it is over, and I entreat your pardon.'

It was in vain that Mr. Hamilton recommended to Miss Stanhope and Fanny to give their attention to the Opera; he had fixed it for the night, and they could neither of them hear or see any other person. As to Fanny, she was affected beyond measure by the anguish expressed on the countenance of her new friend, and she found it difficult to restrain the tears that were ready to drop from her eyes. Mr. Hamilton perceived her emotion, and fearful lest it should attract the notice of the ladies around her, he rose from his seat, and quitted the box. The Duke of Albemarle entered as he did so, and placing himself behind Fanny, he remained stationary until the party quitted the theatre.

It was in vain, however, that he addressed his conversation to Fanny, or indeed to Miss Stanhope; so lost were they in conjectures as to the possible cause of Mr. Hamilton's sorrow, that a monosyllable was the utmost the duke could obtain in answer to any thing that he said! Inflamed with jealousy, and exasperated beyond the bounds of prudence, he seized Fanny's arm as she was entering the coffee-room, and darting at her a look of anger, he said, in a tone of voice that spoke his inward emotion, 'Inexorable

girl, forbear to trifle thus with my happiness—remember my life is in your hands; never will I marry any other woman!

‘Then you will *die single*,’ said a harsh voice behind him; and at the same moment he felt a hand grasp his arm with violence. He turned round and beheld Lord Somertown, who immediately obliged him to quit Fanny, and go with him.

‘I came hither,’ said his lordship, ‘in search of my nephew, little imagining what a *fool* I was looking for.’

Ashamed and confused, beyond expression, the duke suffered himself to be led away by Lord Somertown (who had taken hold of his arm) to his carriage, without proffering a single word. His uncle was silent also for some time after they were seated in the chariot; at length, however, he spoke:—‘I had formed a better opinion of your understanding,’ said his lordship. ‘A man may *trifle* with as many women as he pleases, but when he so far forgets himself as to talk of marriage he deserves to be posted for a blockhead. An intrigue with the companion of your intended wife is most ridiculously indiscreet, and particularly so before you are *secure* of her. It is not morality I am preaching to you, for you already know my opinion on that subject; all I wish to inculcate is a *prudent* regard to my wishes, and your own interest. I have set my mind upon this union; and if it fails, through your *délinquency*, woe unto the frail cause of it! You know me, Henry; take care, then, how you offend me. If you value the painted puppet you were pretending to worship in that fulsome strain of *idolatry*, beware of drawing down my displeasure upon her. If I thought she stood in the way of your marriage with Miss Stanhope, by heavens I would annihilate her! She should vanish from your fascinated eyes, nor leave a trace of her insignificant existence behind her.’

The duke shuddered as he listened to Lord Somertown’s threatening language, for well did he know that, if the *power* were lent him, he did not want the *will* to execute the direst vengeance on those he deemed his enemies. The bare idea of exposing the lovely Fanny to his uncle’s fury was dreadful to him, and he resolved to dissemble his real sentiments under a show of obedience. ‘I am concerned,’ said he, hesitating from the consciousness of a duplicity to which his soul was a stranger; ‘I am concerned that your lordship should mistake a little unmeaning gallantry, shown to a

young beautiful woman, for a serious attachment. I have told your lordship that it was my wish to marry Miss Stanhope, and I now assure you that I still admire the same lady that then occupied my heart, in preference to all others: and if I don't marry Amelia Stanhope, the impediment to our union will not originate in *me*.'

'Bravo!' exclaimed Lord Somertown, 'if you are sincere it is well; but think not that I am to be deceived by a stripling like you. That girl is an artful creature, who has her views in her pretended coyness; but I repeat, beware how you let me suspect any thing serious in that quarter. Remember, it will be at the peril of your *minion*!'

The duke again affirmed that he was ready to fulfil the contract with Miss Stanhope, and Lord Somertown was, or at least appeared to be, satisfied.

When, however, he retired to his apartment, the agitation of the duke's mind was intolerable; he had pledged his word to his uncle to marry Miss Stanhope, provided she was willing to accept him as a husband; and although the promise was extorted by his fears for Fanny's safety, he could not for an instant conceive the possibility of forfeiting his word, should she, contrary to her solemn assurances, place no barrier in the way of their nuptials. 'Good heavens!' said he, 'what would become of me should I find myself entangled in a net of my own weaving. Amelia has promised to render our marriage impossible; is she then betrothed to another? And does she mean to evade her union with me, by running away with her favoured lover? Alas! her schemes may be rendered abortive by the vigilance of her guardians, and between threats and persuasions she may be brought to consent to the annihilation of my happiness. Well, should that be the case, I must console myself by reflecting that my fears for the adored object of my affection led me to the fatal sacrifice. Had I appeared irresolute, or hesitated in answering my uncle, his vengeance would have fallen on the defenceless Fanny, and then the agony of my soul would have been too much for me to support. No, I have acted in the only way that was left me to insure her safety; and if that were purchased with my life, it were cheaply bought. But I will cherish better hopes; Amelia Stanhope is generous; she

will be faithful, and I shall yet possess the power of addressing the only woman I can ever love.'

With these reflections, fluctuating between hope and fear, the duke passed a sleepless night, and arose the next morning dispirited and pale from the anxiety that still preyed upon his spirits.

In the meantime, Fanny had not been much more calm; but her agitation had not originated in the same cause, for love had nothing to do with the emotions that harassed her mind. An interest that she could not define was excited in her heart for Mr. Hamilton, and it was with a mixture of terror and joy that she received the following note from him, as he was assisting her to get into the Marchioness of Petersfield's carriage. She counted the minutes till she was alone, and free to peruse it; for she would not trust even Miss Stanhope with the knowledge of her having received it. The instant her lively friend had bid her good night, she tore open the seal with a trembling hand, and read the following mysterious words:—

' You are going to Pemberton Abbey, so am I; and I trust we shall there find an opportunity of meeting without spies or intruders. I want to tell you the history of my eventful life. Something whispers me that you are interested in it, beyond what you at present suspect. Oh, should it prove so—what bliss for both of us! I dare not trust the thought. Farewell until we meet again.'

CHAPTER XXII.

◆◆◆

Tete-a-Tete.

THE agitation excited in the bosom of Fanny, by the reading of Mr. Hamilton's note, did not easily subside. The words contained in it implied a mystery that awakened every feeling of her heart, should she indeed find a parent! The idea was insupportable, for although inspired by hope, it was unsanctioned by reason; and

she felt that to part with the sweet expectation, however vague or unfounded, would now cost her very dear. The whole of the night wore away in unavailing conjecture, and the morning found her agitation as much bewildered in the labyrinth of uncertainty as when she laid her aching head upon the pillow. She was obliged, however, to conceal her emotions, lest any step should be taken to prevent the promised interview. The few succeeding days that intervened between the Opera and her departure for Pemberton Abbey, were engrossed by preparations for the journey; and although Amelia tried every stratagem to get Fanny to come to her at the Marquis of Petersfield's, she could not succeed; and she quitted London without seeing the Duke of Albemarle, who did not dare to make any attempt to obtain that pleasure, except by visiting Amelia frequently, in the hope of meeting her there. Disappointment was constantly his portion, however; and Lord Somertown, whose vigilance had never slept since his suspicions were first awakened, was convinced that Fanny left town without any communication having passed between them. That vindictive nobleman had long been conversant in the best method of employing spies, and when he wished to ascertain any fact relative to those who had incurred his displeasure, he spared neither pains nor expense to obtain the information he wanted. Poor Fanny was now the object of his vengeance, and his intended victim; and he took care to surround the steps of the hapless girl with creatures devoted to his service, and willing to assist his most diabolical plans for the sake of obtaining a continuation of the bribes that had perverted their principles. There is a God, however, whose all-seeing wisdom can penetrate the darkest machinations of cunning, and whose power can protect the weakest of his creatures against a host of enemies. That merciful Being was now watching over the seemingly unprotected Fanny, and viewing with an eye of stern displeasure the dark plots of her insidious foes.

Lady Maria Ross was but an indifferent traveller; and as the weather was warm, and the journey of more than two hundred and fifty miles in length, it was determined that the family should sleep two nights on the road. The first day's journey ended at a lone inn, nearly a hundred miles from town, in a spot so romantically beautiful, that Fanny was enchanted with the rich scenery around

it, displayed by a clear moon, now nearly at the full, in a more interesting landscape than when gilt by the sun-beams of '*the garish eye of day.*' Instead, therefore, of retiring to bed when she entered the room for the night, she continued at one of the windows, contemplating with delight the beautiful prospect, until a clock, from a distant church, struck one; she was then thinking of seeking her pillow; but as she was receding from the window, her eye rested on the tall figure of a man, who appeared to be gazing at the spot where she stood. His attitude was so fixed, that she imagined he had been there some time, although she had not before observed him; but whether he could distinguish her or not, she could not ascertain, as no sign on his part implied any consciousness of her existence. The sight, however, of a human being, at that dreary hour, and in that lone situation, for the stillness of the house had long since proclaimed that its inhabitants were wrapt in the arms of sleep, gave her a sensation of alarm, that made her close her window with precipitation; and drawing the curtain that shaded it, she hastily prepared for bed.

Before she entered that mansion of repose, however, she stole another glance from the window, to satisfy herself whether the figure was still there. It had vanished from the spot where she had first seen it; but although the declining beams of the moon cast a broad shadow over one part of the scene, she was soon able to distinguish it standing close under her window, and with looks cast upwards, as if observing her chamber. A handkerchief applied to the face completely shrouded the features from her ken, had he stood in the light; but the dark spot he had chosen rendered that caution unnecessary. As Fanny perceived the figure, she uttered a faint scream, and put her hand before her eyes. When she again withdrew it, the apparition had vanished, and although she watched until another hour resounded from the village turret, she beheld it no more.

It would be a vain task to attempt to describe the variety of conjectures, which occupied the mind of Fanny, through the wakeful hours that succeeded this mysterious vision. Sometimes she was inclined to believe, that *she* was not concerned in its appearances; but the next moment she rejected the idea, and felt an instinctive conviction, that it portended the vigilant observation of some

friend or foe.—And yet she did not stand in need of an act of friendship, attended with such apparent inconvenience to the person who performed it. And as to the *foe*, she was unconscious that she had one. At length, overcome with fatigue and watching, she dropped into a deep slumber, from which she did not awake until a hasty summons to breakfast informed her how much she had trespassed beyond the usual hour of rising. The bustle occasioned by over-sleeping herself broke the train of her thoughts, and rendered her fitter to meet the family at the breakfast table.—The journey of that day was unmolested by any incident, and again the travellers rested at a lone house. It was always Col. Ross's custom, when he slept on the road, to avoid towns; and the inns he had selected to repose at, on this journey, were every way calculated to make his choice approved. They were replete with every convenience for the accommodation of a large family, and the spots where they stood the most picturesque that can be imagined. Fanny had been struck with the beauty of the scenery surrounding that where she past the first night; but when she viewed the situation of the second inn, she was still more enchanted, and she could not forbear exclaiming, as she alit from the carriage, that she never saw such a paradise before. Lady Maria was no enthusiast, either in poetry or painting, and therefore she viewed the wild beauties of the majestic hills, the rich luxuriance of the scattered woods, and all the magic beauty of the fairy landscape, with a sang-froid that astonished Fanny, whose every faculty appeared strained to catch the prospect that delighted her. The moon was risen in its full splendour by the time tea was over.

‘Oh, how I should like a walk this delightful evening,’ said Fanny, thoughtlessly; ‘if it were not for the fear of——.’ She stopped short, and blushed exceedingly, recollecting that she had determined not to mention the nocturnal apparition that had alarmed her.

‘The fear of what?’ repeated Col. Ross. ‘What fear can you have, Fanny, that needs prevent your taking a walk such an evening as this, provided I escort you?’

‘O none to be sure,’ replied she; ‘I only meant, that I should be afraid to walk alone.’

‘Alone, certainly, would not be proper,’ said the colonel, ‘but

there can be no objection to your going well attended.—Mais, will you accompany us?

‘Oh no,’ answered her ladyship, ‘the fatigue of the journey is quite enough for me. I am not such an admirer of nature, nor have I such a romantic turn for moon-light contemplations as Fanny.’ This was spoken in a tone of splenetic fretfulness, that betrayed Lady Maria’s displeasure at the colonel’s proposal; and Fanny immediately declared that she would not go, nor could the eloquence exerted by the colonel induce her to accept his offer of attending her. He appeared piqued at her refusal, and muttered something between his teeth of self-willed girls.

Poor Fanny was glad to escape from her companions, who were neither of them in good humour, and therefore she retired early to her chamber.

‘At least,’ said she, as she seated herself at her window, ‘here I need not fear that I shall be disturbed by the *apparition*; he has scarcely ridden hither, on the wings of the wind, to disturb my nocturnal contemplations!'

The room that Fanny inhabited looked into a small garden, from whence a flight of steps reached to a balcony close under her window. The bustle of the inn had not yet subsided, but the sounds were distant, for the apartment she occupied was at the end of the corridor, and quite remote from the interior of the house.

A beautiful champaign country opened to the view at the extremity of the garden. On the left were seen scattered woods, bounded by lofty hills, so varied in size, that they appeared, as the moon silvered their majestic points, as if they were rising emulous of reflecting her lustrous beams.

To the right, on a bold eminence, and unadorned by even a single tree, to soften the stern aspect of the picture, rose the majestic ruins of an ancient castle, which seemed in sullen pride to frown upon the sons of little men, who now dared to tread the sacred spot where once flourished heroes unbending and invincible.

At the proud battlements that entrenched them, Fanny gazed with delight, as the clear moon darted her silver radiance through the dismantled windows, and ivy-clad loop-holes of the gloomy tower. The scene was solemn and sublime, and calculated to raise the enthusiastic imagination of youth to the highest pitch of mental

enjoyment. By degrees the noises in the house died away, and the calm stillness was unbroken, save that at intervals the distant watch-dog barked at some casual straggler within the precincts of his nightly care.

Fanny was in raptures; she had extinguished her candle, that its light might not expose her to the observation of any distant wanderer. Her eye dwelt alternately upon the rich forest, the hills bright with the rays of luna, and the frowning castle, proud, and in majestic loneliness.

And that *seeing* might not be the only sense, a woodbine, whose luxuriant branches covered the walls of the house, and breathed fragrance around, now intruded some of its spicy flowers within the open casement. Fanny inhaled the balmy gale as the night-breeze shook its dewy wings around her; and entranced in an ecstasy of enjoyment, she sat unmindful of the waning night, until a clock striking *one* roused her from her pleasing reverie. The hour reminded her of the figure she had seen the preceding night, and so strong was the power of fancy upon her mind, that her eye mechanically sought it in the scene before her. She looked however in vain; the most profound stillness reigned, and the clear rays of the moon displayed nothing but inanimate objects to her view.— 'No,' said she, speaking aloud, unconscious that she did so, 'No, he has not followed me here. Alas! I fear my imagination misleads me, and the fairy vision it has conjured up, to delight, will melt into *ether*.' As she spoke, she cast her eyes towards the castle, and fancied that she saw something emerge from one of its dilapidated portals. She was soon convinced that she was right, for she beheld the same tall figure she had seen the preceding night, moving towards the garden that skirted the inn. Although she had almost *wished* to see it, an indistinct horror seized her as she gazed upon its approaching footsteps: and she was going to retire from the window, when she thought she heard her name pronounced distinctly, though in a low voice, under her window. Startled at the sound, she lent forward to ascertain whence it proceeded, and to her astonishment beheld Col. Ross standing in the balcony beneath. 'What can be the cause of this nocturnal watching?' said he, rather sternly. 'This is the second time I have been witness to your sitting up half the night at your window!

'The extreme beauty of the surrounding scenery attracted me to my window to view it,' replied Fanny; 'and when I had once indulged in the contemplation, I found it impossible to leave it. There is nothing extraordinary, sure, in that, when you recollect what an enthusiastic admirer I am of the beauties of nature.'

'Nature has a *variety* of beauties, most undoubtedly,' replied the colonel; 'and I suppose the fortunate being you apostrophised just now is one of them, is he not?'

'I am astonished,' replied Fanny, 'that you should think it worth while to watch me, and listen under my window, sir, at an hour when it appears so strange to you that *I* should be watching.'

'Your astonishment would cease,' rejoined he, 'could you know the real state of my heart; could you know that the most trivial of your actions is important in my eyes. But when I think you are about to bestow upon a favoured lover that heaven of love, which I am determined no man but myself shall possess, and *live!* it is *then* that every feeling of my soul is harrowed up, every energy awakened, and the hurricane of passion transports me beyond the boundary of reason and prudence.'

'This language is certainly unfit for me to listen to,' interrupted Fanny with dignity; 'and strange and incomprehensible as your allusions are, sir, I forbear to question you.' So saying, she shut down the window, and left the colonel to the enjoyment of his own reflections.

It may readily be supposed that they were none of the pleasantest. Hurried away by the emotion of the moment, he had made a premature discovery of a passion he had hitherto concealed with such caution; and he knew enough of Fanny to be certain that he had incurred her indignation, if not her abhorrence, by so infamous an avowal.

In the mean time she retired from the window, overwhelmed by feelings of resentment and distress, impossible to describe. She had always felt a secret antipathy to Colonel Ross, which was now justified by his atrocious conduct. Her heart had often reproached her for the ungrateful return she made to the continual acts of kindness she experienced from him, and she had often endeavoured to conquer a dislike she thought founded in caprice. It was now proved, however, that her repugnance to his friendship was

the instinct of a mind too pure and delicate to assimilate with his ; which, though veiled beneath the specious mask of hypocrisy, was the seat of every vice that deforms human nature.

‘ Oh Lady Ellincourt ! my beloved benefactress,’ exclaimed Fanny, clasping her hands together in an agony of distress, ‘ to what a care have you confided your unhappy girl ? Ah little does Lord Ellincourt think what a villain is honoured with the *name of his friend* ! Return, dear protectors of my infancy, return and restore me, once more, to happiness and security !’

Full of these thoughts, the disconsolate Fanny threw herself upon her bed, and vented her oppressed feelings in a flood of tears. When her emotions had in some measure subsided, she recollect ed the figure she had seen emerging from the castle, and she longed to ascertain whether it were indeed the same that she had seen the preceding night. She feared, however, to go to the window, lest Colonel Ross should be still beneath it, and mistake her motive by imagining she came thither to look for him. This consideration restrained her curiosity, and she went to bed without stealing one glance from the window. The next morning, when she was ready to descend to breakfast, she felt the greatest awkwardness at the idea of meeting Col. Ross, nor did she entertain a doubt that *his* confusion would at least equal hers, if not exceed it. What then was her astonishment, when on entering the room where Lady Maria and he were already at breakfast, she beheld him, his brow armed with frowns, and heard him, in a tone of reproachful authority, reprimand her for her late attendance on the breakfast table. ‘ This tardiness,’ added he, ‘ is owing, no doubt, to your *nocturnal* watchings ; but I warn you, Miss Fanny, that I will have no such doings whilst you are under our protection.’

Struck dumb by the astonishment that had seized her, Fanny seated herself at the table, without uttering a word ; but she felt equally unable to eat as to speak.

Lady Maria observed her distress, and good-naturedly wished to relieve it. ‘ My dear Fanny,’ said she, ‘ do not let the colonel’s reprimand distress you so ; he only speaks for your good. His anxiety for your welfare makes him, perhaps, too scrupulous about trifles. You had been expressing your admiration of moonlight scenery ; it was therefore natural you should indulge yourself with a *look*, as you could not take a *walk*.’

'The admiring a moonlight scene from her chamber window is certainly no *crime*,' said the colonel, 'if to *admire that* were the motive that carried her there; but when it is to converse with a stranger, an *adventurer*, a person that nobody knows, and one of whose doubtful character she has received ample warning, that a young lady leaves her quiet pillow, and exposes herself at the dead hour of the night to the dangers of such an assignation, then, indeed, the case is altered, and the seemingly simple action deserves the severest reprobation.'

Fanny's surprise gave way to her indignation, when she found herself thus daringly accused of a thing she had not even dreamt of. 'I cannot express,' said she, 'the astonishment that has seized me, to find such a palpable falsehood imputed to me. I cannot even guess what Col. Ross alludes to, as I solemnly declare that I conversed with no man from my window; had made appointment with no man; and therefore cannot possibly deserve the colonel's allegations against me.'

'Good heavens,' exclaimed the colonel, striking his hands together with well-feigned astonishment, 'I did not think you were capable of such duplicity. Surely, Miss Fanny, you will not tell me that I did *not* hear you speaking to a man from your window? That I did not hear that man declare the most ardent passion for you, and swear that no other should ever possess you, and *live*? You will not have the effrontery to deny that.'

Fanny was thunderstruck to hear the very words repeated by the colonel which he had himself made use of to her, and which she supposed he would have trembled to find remembered, turned as an accusation against herself. It was an audacity in villainy too mighty for her to cope with: she could only lift her hands and eyes in silent wonder.

'I know,' continued the colonel, 'the fellow that is taking such pains to follow you; it is the man who made acquaintance with you in Hyde Park, when I came so opportunely to save you from the consequences of your folly.'

'The gentleman who rescued me from the impertinence of a rude stranger,' said Fanny, 'is Mr. Hamilton, and as much distinguished for his politeness as his riches. Surely he cannot deserve the epithets you bestow upon him, sir.'

'The person who imposes himself upon you for Mr. Hamilton is not that gentleman,' said the colonel: 'he only resembles that gentleman in person, and makes use of that likeness to impose upon the unwary.'

'As I am acquainted with only one Mr. Hamilton,' replied Fanny, 'his resemblance to another, whom I never saw, could avail him nothing with me.'

'You seem inclined to vindicate your conduct, rather than confess your error,' said the colonel, sternly; 'but I would wish you to recollect, Miss Fanny, that as Lady Ellincourt intrusted you to our guardianship, during her absence, it behoves us to watch over your conduct; and if Lady Maria chooses to allow you such latitude, I don't. And I give you notice, that your *nocturnal lover* will be treated with the severity he deserves, if he is found lurking about Pemberton Abbey.'

'If the man who was so daring as to declare a passion for me, last night, in defiance of decency and morality,' said Fanny; 'if he can be found, I think he cannot be treated with more severity than he deserves—with more contempt than I feel for him.'

'Tis well,' said the colonel, his eyes flashing fury: 'I am glad I know your sentiments, madam; and you may depend upon it I will act accordingly.'

Fanny involuntarily trembled as she listened to this menace, though she could not possibly conceive what it was intended to convey.

Lady Maria looked surprised, and endeavoured, with a good-humoured laugh, to turn the conversation to something more agreeable. Though subject to little gusts of fractiousness, when her vanity was wounded, Lady Maria was naturally good-natured, and her kind heart was pained by Fanny's evident distress. Her efforts, however, proved all in vain; the colonel preserved a sullen silence, whilst tears of real anguish and dismay bedewed the cheeks of the unhappy Fanny.

But very little breakfast was eaten by any of the party; and the carriage being announced, as in readiness for their departure, they began their journey in a frame of mind not likely to render it very pleasant.

CHAPTER XXIII.

*Pemberton Abbey.*

DURING the *silent* ride that ensued, Fanny's ideas were occupied by the most painful reflections, the most anxious uncertainty.

Col. Ross had spoken as if he were certain that he knew the person whose appearance for two nights had excited her curiosity so greatly. The figure had seemed to her eye to resemble that of Mr. Hamilton; but it was impossible for her to ascertain if it were really him or not, as his face had never been revealed to her view. He had promised to see her at Pemberton Abbey, in the letter she had received from him just before she left London; but there appeared no probability that he could have followed her steps with such exactitude upon the road, as to rest every night at the same spot, and without being observed during the day; nor did there appear any reasonable motive for his lurking about the precincts of the inn, at the dead hour of the night, without knowing that she would be at her chamber window, if it were really he he wanted to speak to.

The *field of conjecture* is boundless, and Fanny's imagination wandered in it until it was weary; nor could it draw a single conclusion from its researches, to rest upon after the fatiguing exertion.

Towards the close of the day the turrets of Pemberton Abbey struck the eyes of the travellers as they ascended a steep hill, from the summit of which they beheld the rich valley in which that venerable edifice was situate.

An exclamation of pleasure burst involuntarily from the lips of Fanny, as she recognised the spot where she had passed so many happy days with her beloved Lady Ellincourt, whilst her heightened colour and sparkling eyes betrayed the emotions of her heart.

'You are a happy girl, Fanny,' said Lady Maria, smiling: 'your romantic admiration of beautiful scenery seems to give you real delight.'

'It is not mere admiration that excites my pleasure now,' replied Fanny; 'the recollection of dear friends has its share in the sweet sensation. The sight of Pemberton Abbey brings the happiest moments of my life to my remembrance; and I can scarcely persuade myself that the dear lady I long to embrace will not be there to receive me. Oh, if she were, what happiness would be mine!'

'The scheme of happiness would be *incomplete*,' said Colonel Ross, with a sneer, 'unless the *dear lord* were there as well as the *dear lady*.'

'Most true,' answered Fanny; 'Lord Ellincourt is almost as dear to my heart as his amiable mother. I am not sure whether he is not *quite* as dear. The debt of gratitude, to his lordship, has the claim of *priority*. But for *his* goodness I should never have known that revered lady.'

'You must take care *now*,' said Col. Ross, 'how you make such unequivocal confessions of *loving* his lordship. Young Lady Ellincourt may not like it, perhaps, so well as the dowager did.'

'The love I bear Lord Ellincourt,' replied Fanny, blushing, 'can never give offence to any body, and, I am sure, least of all to the sweet lady you allude to.'

'I am glad to hear it is of such a nature,' replied Colonel Ross, sarcastically. 'I merely spoke with the wish of cautioning you against professions of regard that might give rise to jealousy, should Lady Ellincourt be one of those *narrow-minded women* who wish to keep their husbands to themselves.'

'Did every one consider the marriage vow in the same sacred light that *I do*,' replied Fanny, 'there would need no caution against an infringement of its rights.'

As she spoke her cheeks glowed with indignation, and she cast a look of disdain at Colonel Ross that cut him to the soul. Yet, although it awakened remorse in his depraved mind, it did not stimulate repentance, but rather served to inflame that desire of revenge which was already kindled in his bosom.

my dear sir

Lady Maria seemed lost in astonishment as she listened in silence to the dispute between her husband and Fanny. The asperity which was evident in the words of both surprised her beyond measure; the kindness with which the colonel had hitherto treated Fanny, making the change as wonderful on his side, as Fanny's native mildness did on hers.

Some secret motive must actuate both; but what it could possibly be, remained impervious to the shallow capacity of the good-natured Lady Maria.

At length the arrival of the carriage at Pemberton Abbey put a stop to conjecture and resentment; and the bustle of establishing themselves in their different apartments procured amusement for all the travellers.

Fanny's mind could now admit but one subject; it was wholly absorbed in reflections on her absent friends, whose images, ever present in her grateful heart, were now more particularly brought before her eyes, by the thousand local circumstances calculated to recall the pleasing remembrance on the spot where their kindness, so often repeated, had endeared them to her.

The bed-room allotted for Fanny's use, was the one she had occupied when Lady Ellincourt was there; and as her ladyship's room was not chosen by Lady Maria, the whole suite of apartments were at Fanny's command, whose greatest pleasure now consisted in wandering through the forsaken chambers, gazing alternately on a picture of Lord Ellincourt, that was over the chimney in the dressing-room, and another of his amiable mother, which hung in the adjoining bed-room. It seemed, as she contemplated the senseless canvass, as if the features so admirably pourtrayed upon its surface, sympathized in the sufferings she complained of.

Lady Ellincourt wore the expression of the tenderest pity, whilst those of her son appeared animated by the glow of spirited resentment.

' Dear shades of my distant protectors!' exclaimed Fanny, apostrophising the portraits she was looking at, ' why can ye not now assist the forlorn object of your solicitude? Why am I doomed to suffer the tyranny of oppression, even in the very house where my infant heart first learnt the pleasing lessons of gratitude and affection? But why do I call myself forlorn? Am I not under the

immediate protection of heaven? Can any power, however mighty, prevail against the arm of Omnipotence? To that benign guardianship I commend myself, whose watchful eye will not suffer confiding innocence to trust in vain!

With thoughts such as these did the artless Fanny endeavour to soothe her perturbed mind; and by placing a confidence in heaven, she soon found her terrors subside, and that peace which the world can neither give nor take away became the inmate of her heart.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Painful Suspense.

IT is time now to return to Miss Stanhope and the Duke of Albemarle, for whose nuptials every preparation went on with the utmost celerity.

To have seen Amelia in the midst of the crowd of milliners, dress-makers, jewellers, &c. &c. that daily surrounded her, giving orders for the various articles of finery necessary to render her bridal pomp complete, nobody would have imagined that she was determined never to fulfil the contract for which she was preparing; indeed that she had already put it out of her power to do so.

It is impossible to describe the anxiety of mind which the Duke of Albemarle suffered, during the continuance of this suspense; for, notwithstanding Miss Stanhope's promises to render the scheme of the marriage abortive, and her injunction to him to rely implicitly upon her faith, he could not divest himself wholly of doubt and distrust; and he would most assuredly have disclosed the truth to his uncle, had his own safety alone been endangered by so doing.

The Duke of Albemarle was naturally open and candid, and the

part so full of duplicity which he had undertaken pained him exceedingly.

Conversing one day with Lord Somertown, on the subject of his approaching marriage with Miss Stanhope, he became suddenly perplexed, his colour heightened, and his hesitating accents betrayed the perturbation of his breast. His uncle perceiving his confusion, and attributing it to his reluctance to marry Miss Stanhope, although he did not suspect his nephew of any intention to deceive him, regarded him with a stern look, and speaking in that under tone which is so expressive of deliberate malice, he said, ' Whatever may be your thoughts, Henry, on the union I have decided upon, tell them not to me; and beware how your actions betray a design to oppose my wishes. You are in the toil of the fowler, and cannot escape the meshes that enclose you. You will perhaps tell me, you despise poverty, and are fearless of my displeasure. But answer me, boy, can you brave *death*? not your own death, but the extinction of that painted butterfly you doat upon?' The duke involuntarily shuddered. ' Yes,' continued Lord Somertown, ' that *insect* is in my power, and I tell you *she dies*, instantly dies, should any act of disobedience on your part call down my vengeance upon her. I now leave you to your own decision. One step, one single step of yours will hurl your minion to destruction!'

Lord Somertown did not wait for the duke's answer, but instantly quitting the room, left him to the meditations his horrible speech had excited.

It is impossible to describe the duke's feelings; scarcely, indeed, could he analyze them himself, such a mixture were they of anger and apprehension, indignation and anguish. Like a lion struggling in the toils of the hunter, his rage could only be equalled by his grief at the total subversion of his power.

In regard to Lord Somertown's assertion, that he held Fanny in his power, the duke, however, flattered himself that it was made only with a view to alarm him. The protection of Lady Maria Ross, he judged, was too respectable to admit any doubt of her actual safety, at least for the present; but he knew the cruel vindictive temper of his uncle too well to doubt that he would find some mode of revenging himself upon that hapless girl, at some

future opportunity, should any action of his nephew's seem to authorize the proceeding. Thus circumstanced, the duke was under the necessity of committing himself to the guidance of Amelia, and to await, in trembling expectation, the result of her scheme for dissolving the union. It was equally necessary that he should assume such an appearance of tranquillity as was very foreign to the feelings of his heart, but which was indispensable, if he hoped to impose upon his uncle.

The time, however, approached with rapid strides, and no action of Miss Stanhope's seemed to authorize the hopes she had given.

A thousand doubts disturbed the mind of her appointed bridegroom, who suffered without daring to complain. She saw, but took no notice of his sufferings, without it was to add to them by some little flippancy; some question, relative to a future arrangement, that was made with such an air of seriousness as never failed to give added poignancy to his already irritated feelings. She would then laugh at his '*doleful looks*,' as she called the appearance of anguish, that in spite of his best efforts would steal over his features whilst suffering under the tortures of prolonged suspense.

'Your grace gives me but a melancholy prospect,' said she one day, 'when I try to peep over the matrimonial pale, by picturing to myself the felicity of our future conjugal *tete-a-tetes*. That long face of yours would make an excellent model for a bust of Trophonias. I dare say a week of your company will have as good an effect upon my vivacity, as a visit of the same length to the cave of that laughter-quelling gentleman. Depend upon it, I shall never even smile again after the holy noose is tied; so excuse me for making the best of my time now.' And away ran the giddy girl, laughing at the poor duke's distress in the most unmerciful manner.

At the signing of the marriage articles, the Duke of Albemarle expected that Amelia would make the promised declaration of her aversion to the proposed marriage; but to his unspeakable disappointment and surprise, Miss Stanhope appeared in more than usual spirits on the occasion, and introduced a gentleman to witness the deed by his signature, to whom she said she had promised

that honour in a frolic, one day, and who now claimed the fulfilment of her promise with an earnestness she could not repress. Her guardian and Lord Somertown yielded to what they supposed a giddy whim, and Sir Edward ~~Washington~~ (for he was the gentleman,) wrote his name where ~~the~~ lawyers directed him; nor did the Duke of Albemarle perceive any irregularity in the placing of the other names, although his grace appeared to be poring over the fatal instrument longer than any other person present.

I will not pretend to describe what were his feelings when twelve o'clock the next day was fixed upon for his nuptials, nor attempt to delineate the agonized expression of his features when, as he was leading Miss Stanhope into the drawing-room, after the signature of the articles, she said in a half whisper, 'I have succeeded even beyond my hopes; my happiness is now ensured; and I hope to-morrow will appear to your grace, as it does to me, the harbinger of love and joy.'

The duke endeavoured to make an answer, but the words died upon his lips, for as he looked up, he perceived his uncle observing him with fury sparkling in his eyes; and, as he passed him, uttered these words in an under voice, 'I see your reluctance, your ungrateful delinquency; but beware. Remember you are passing sentence upon your minion.'

CHAPTER XXV.

The Nuptials.

AFTER a sleepless night, the morning broke upon the Duke of Albemarle; no hint had been given him, by the merciless Amelia, to cheer his flagging spirits, and he now began to think himself the dupe of a mean artifice. 'She saw my reluctance to marry her,' said he, mentally; 'and fearful lest my repugnance should sur-

mount every other consideration, and induce me to declare my sentiments to Lord Somertown, she has stooped to the meanest disguise to entrap me securely. The ducal coronet has greater charms in her eyes than honour or integrity. And shall I marry such a woman? No! every feeling of my soul recoils from the bare idea. How can I listen to that awful exhortation at the communion of the sacred ceremony, "As he shall answer at the great Day of Judgment?" Can I listen, I say, and then consent to rush on wilful perjury? Impossible! If, indeed, I am driven to that extremity, I will throw off the disguise that so ill conceals my feelings, even at the foot of the altar. But, alas! what do I rave at? Lord Somertown will then wreak his vengeance upon the lovely object of my affection, and transfix my heart with a far keener shaft than any suffering inflicted on me alone. Yet surely I shall have time enough to warn her of danger ere it can reach her.'

With thoughts like these was the mind of the unhappy lover perplexed; and so absent was he to every thing relating to the business of the morning, that he made the whole party wait above half an hour, by neglecting to dress himself in time. When he arrived at Lord Petersfield's, where the ceremony was to be performed, he found all the company assembled, and received a severe rebuke from Lord Somertown for his remissness.

'Make the best apology you can to your bride,' said his lordship, 'she deserves it of you; for she has borne your neglect with unparalleled good humour.'

The duke advanced to take Miss Stanhope's hand, who stooping forward, said in a low voice, whilst an arch smile played on her lips:

*'For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of young Lochinvar.'*

The duke paid but little attention to her words, however, for his whole frame shook with agony when he saw the Bishop of P——, who was waiting to perform the ceremony, open his book, and heard his voice, reading the awful exhortation just now alluded to. A mist seemed to cover his eyes, and a sickness seized his

heart; for Amelia stood passively, and seemingly assenting to the compliance of the sacrifice. When, however, the bishop made a little pause, at the end of the solemn exordium, Amelia stepped forward.

'Stop,' said she, 'that awful appeal to my sincerity demands a serious answer. You exhort me not to conceal any *impediment* that may forbid my union with Henry Pierrepont, Duke of Albemarle, and I know of one that is *insurmountable*.'

The whole company were struck with astonishment, the duke's countenance brightened, but Lord Somertown, clapping his hands together, exclaimed, 'Some infernal plot has been hatching; but beware, boy, how you trifle with *me!*'

The bishop commanded silence by waving his hand, and then addressed Miss Stanhope.

'This is a strange time, madam,' said he, in an impressive tone, 'to start objections to a union to which you have hitherto appeared to assent; and let me tell you, with the candour that becomes my holy function, that you have been guilty of great levity, in suffering matters to go so far before you make known your objections to the marriage we are all met here to see solemnized. It is, nevertheless, necessary those objections should be known; I request therefore to hear them.'

'I entreat your lordship not to censure my conduct,' said Amelia, 'under the impression that *levity* induced me to act as I have done, since I can solemnly assure you, that I acted from a far better motive. The marriage which was to be cemented between the Duke of Albemarle and me, was a union of interest, projected by our friends, without consulting our inclinations; and from the first moment I was informed of the circumstance, I determined that it should never take place. Until very lately, I imagined that my fortune would be the forfeit of my disobedience; but I have lately been better informed. And I determined to be revenged of Lord Somertown for the artifice he had used to deceive me, by deceiving him in my turn, and making him come to my wedding without marrying his nephew. I felt perfectly satisfied that the duke would feel no disappointment in losing me, and therefore I have kept him in ignorance until this moment; for he believed, when he took my hand just now, that it was my intention to marry

him. That, however, is no longer in my power, as I was married this morning to Sir Everard Mornington. The banns were regularly published, and we have been legally married at our parish church, as that certificate will show,' producing one as she spoke.

'One thing, however,' said Lord Somertown, interrupting Amelia, 'one thing, however, your sagacity has overlooked; the signature of the marriage articles will at least entitle Henry to half your fortune, madam.'

'No, my lord,' replied Amelia, 'it is your lordship's sagacity that was *faulty* there. The marriage articles that were signed yesterday, were made in Sir Everard Mornington's name; the signatures were duly placed; and the deeds, sealed and executed in your lordship's presence, and ratified by your lordship's sign manual, secure to him and his heirs for ever, the same proportion of my fortune as would have belonged to the Duke of Albemarle had the writings been drawn up in his grace's name.'

Lord Somertown stamped his foot in a paroxysm of rage. The bishop again waved his hand to stop the torrent of passion, which he saw ready to burst from the lips of the angry nobleman.

'I repeat,' said the reverend prelate, 'that it was extremely reprehensible to defer this explanation until now; nor have you yet adduced any thing, in your argument, to acquit you of the levity I censured. Surely, madam, this declaration might as well have been made at the signature of the articles, as at this moment.'

'No, my lord,' replied Amelia, 'I was then a *minor*, and some effectual step would have been taken, to prevent what I have now accomplished. I am of *age* to-day; and the first act of my majority was to bestow my hand where my heart was already. I could not with *prudence* venture on an explanation sooner, nor could I consistent with *truth* defer it any longer. I shall now take my leave of this kind assembly, who, having met expressly to celebrate my nuptials, cannot surely refuse their congratulations on their happy completion, so much to my own satisfaction. My *husband* is waiting for me in a carriage at the door. I particularly requested him not to enter the house, as I feared some altercation might take place in the first heat of resentment, which on cooler reflection will, I am sure, be deemed useless and ridiculous, even by Lord Somertown himself.'

'Lord Somertown,' replied that angry nobleman, 'will not be so easily appeased as you may imagine, madam. He will find an opportunity of calling to an account the dastardly incendiary, whose cowardice is now sheltered by the audacity of his *wife*.'

'Nay, never *threaten*, my good lord,' replied Amelia, smiling contemptuously. 'If you meddle with Sir Everard you will find him no *coward*. The disparity of your ages will insure your own safety; for he would not lift his hand against an old man. But take care how you attempt any *bravo* expedition against him; you may not be so fortunate as your father was, in the *Kensington Gardens affair*. *Lord Durham* fell without investigation of the cause of his death, by those who had a right to make it; but suspicion, with her thousand tongues, has whispered dreadful things. Come,' continued she, turning to the duke, and offering her hand to him with a smile, 'you may safely receive this now; so lead me gallantly down stairs.' Then, turning to the company, she repeated the last lines of Lady Heron's song:

'She is won, we are gone over,
'They have fleet steeds that follow, cried young *Lochinvar*.'

The duke mechanically took the proffered hand, and led the intrepid Amelia to the carriage that waited for her, whilst the groupe she had left behind her stood looking upon each other in speechless astonishment.

'A thousand blessings attend you, lovely Amelia,' said the duke, as he assisted Lady Mornington to ascend the dashing vehicle; 'a thousand blessings attend you, and may you be as happy as you have made me.'

'Thank you, thank you,' replied she, smiling, 'I am glad you are in a good humour with me again; for you have looked so *husband-like* for this fortnight past, that you made me hesitate whether I should become a wife or not.'

Sir Everard Mornington received his lovely bride with rapture; and, bowing to the duke, the gay barouche, with four beautiful grey horses, dashed off in the true style of *prime* driving, and the duke returned to the party above stairs.

'You are very *humble* to your jilt of a mistress, Henry,' said

Lord Somertown to his nephew: 'for *my* part, I would sooner have *kicked* than *handed* her down stairs. She carries things with a high hand just now, but I will see whether there is not some redress to be obtained for the insults she has offered me. There is a great deal of connivance in the whole affair,' added he, glancing a look of displeasure at the Marquis of Petersfield; 'but I had no right to expect any thing else from a *Trentham*.' The marquis was a weak man, and had always felt afraid of Lord Somertown, he therefore attempted an explanation, but Lord Somertown refused to listen to it; and, ringing for his carriage, he made a stiff bow to the company, and left the house. As he was quitting the room, he turned to his nephew, and said, in a sarcastic tone, 'You may accompany me, if you please; but not unless you feel inclined to do so. Perhaps it might be more agreeable to you to stay here, and celebrate the nuptials of the Amazonian fury who has just jilted you.'

The duke made no answer to this angry speech, except by following his uncle down stairs. During the whole of their drive home neither party uttered a syllable, and when they arrived in Hanover Square, they retired to their respective apartments. At dinner time, the duke was astonished to find his uncle in the most perfect good humour possible, with not a cloud remaining upon his countenance. As soon as the cloth was removed, and the servants withdrawn, Lord Somertown told his nephew, that he had been weighing matters in his own mind, and upon mature consideration he did not see that cause for regret, in the loss of Miss Stanhope, which he was at first inclined to indulge in: 'Her fortune, ample as it is, would not be an equivalent,' said he, 'for the torment of being married to such a virago. By heavens, I am glad you have escaped her, Henry. I never was so disgusted with any woman before: I *like* none of her worthless sex, but I *hate* her. Now tell me, honestly, are you glad she has served you this trick ?'

'I am certainly not *sorry*,' answered the duke, 'because my heart being engaged to another, Miss Stanhope's merits are lost upon me!'

'It is, indeed, a pity any one should be blind to her superlative merits,' answered Lord Somertown. 'I hope the *coachman*

baronet she has married will be sensible of her worth, and make her *sensible* of his. He will not do her justice if he spares his *horsewhip*; but she is beneath my notice. I intend her one mortification, and then I shall have done with her. I know nothing will vex her equal to your marrying directly. Her vanity would be gratified, by having it supposed, that you were dying of pique at her cruelty: I will therefore give my consent to your marrying that pretty girl, whose charms made such an impression upon you whilst she was in town. I mean *Fanny*, the *nameless* beauty. You seem thunderstruck; what don't you understand me?

'I am astonished,' answered the duke, 'at such a sudden revolution in your lordship's opinion.'

'Well, then, you may suspend your astonishment, and prepare to set out for Pemberton Abbey next week. Do not defer it any longer, lest Hamilton should forestal you there, as Sir Everard Mornington has done here. I understand he has gone down after her; but you know, I suppose, whether the girl is inclined to favour your suit in preference to his. If she is, you have *my* leave to address her. Does the booby understand me? You look as if you had lost your powers of comprehension.'

'I am indeed so wonderstruck,' replied the duke, 'that I can hardly trust the evidence of my senses.'

'Are you willing that it should be as I say?' asked Lord Somertown.

'Most assuredly I am,' answered the duke, 'but feel afraid to indulge in the hopes your lordship has awakened, lest they should lead to disappointment.'

'Nay, then, if that be all, fear nothing,' rejoined Lord Somertown. 'You ought to know me by this time, that what I promise I generally perform. Set out, therefore, to-morrow for Pemberton Abbey; and, if Hamilton has not yet married the girl, take her for your wife. You have my consent, I tell you; but let me hear nothing further now upon the silly subject.'

The duke was going to reply, but Lord Somertown's eye reproved him; and he merely bowed, and left the room. He retired to his own apartment, and rang for his servant to give orders respecting his intended journey, which he determined to commence the first day of the ensuing week. Yet still, amidst preparations

that seemed calculated to fill his heart with joy, a strange pre-sentiment of evil intruded itself upon his mind. This newly-adopted scheme of his uncle's was so sudden, that he could not help fearing some deep design was concealed beneath the specious covering of pretended indulgence. Full well did he know, that a wish to give pleasure had never yet pervaded his uncle's heart. He was sure, therefore, that he must have some malicious end in view, in consenting to his addressing Fanny; and he feared, that of mortifying Amelia was not a motive sufficiently strong to induce him to take the step he had done. But although the duke's mind was thus harassed by conjectures the most painful, he was obliged to act as if satisfied that Lord Somertown's intentions towards him were actuated by the purest benevolence.

To these conjectures we will now leave him, and return to Pemberton Abbey, where we left poor Fanny apostrophising the senseless shades of her distant friends, and vainly calling upon them for that assistance she wanted.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A Father.

ONE night, when Fanny was retiring to rest, she found a sealed note upon her toilet, superscribed to herself. Surprise, and something like fear, seized her mind as with trembling hand she broke the seal of this mysterious address; for mysterious it must appear, that a note should be left upon her dressing-table, in a place where she knew nobody beyond the walls of the house she inhabited.

On opening the paper she found it was from Mr. Hamilton. It contained the following words:

‘I have kept my word, and am now an inhabitant of the house that contains you. This assertion startles you, no doubt; but when

we meet I will explain the mystery to your satisfaction. I have now no doubts remaining respecting who you are, neither will you, when you hear the wonders I have to relate to you.

“Be not alarmed at my entering your chamber to-morrow night, at twelve o’clock; I shall then conduct you to an old friend, who will convince you that you are indeed my daughter. Yes, beloved Fanny, you have found a father in the man who now uses the name of *Hamilton*!”

“Merciful heaven!” exclaimed Fanny, lifting up her hands, and dropping the note which had excited such emotion in her heart. “Can it then be, that I have found a parent? All-powerful nature! it was thy voice that spoke within me, when first I beheld the author of my being; it was thy power that called forth my affection with such irresistible force, and bid me love, before I knew my father! Alas! how shall I bear the agitation, that now harrows up my feelings, for so many hours as those that must intervene before the time appointed for our meeting?”

Full of emotions such as these, poor Fanny paced up and down her chamber, forgetful of the waning night, and incapable of calming her perturbed imagination. Sometimes she felt such an ecstasy of joy, that she could scarcely flatter herself the picture her fancy drew, of the happiness awaiting her, could really be a true one. A doubt would then obtrude itself, that perhaps this was some artifice to ensnare her. And she recollects, with dismay, that Mr. Hamilton was a total stranger to her; and that, whatever might be the instinctive affection she had felt for him, she had yet no certain proof that he was worthy of the confidence she must repose in him, when she was called upon to commit herself to his guidance at the dead hour of the night, and suffer him to lead her to some sequestered spot, impervious to the knowledge even of those who inhabited the same house.

These were appalling reflections; yet could they not subdue the impulse she felt to obey the summons, and learn her origin from the lips of a *soi-disant* parent.

After several hours spent in the most painful agitation, her wearied frame seemed ready to sink under the combined powers of emotion and fatigue; and unable any longer to bear up against their force, Fanny threw herself, dressed as she was, upon her bed.

A deep slumber soon sealed her senses, and she awoke not until the sun had been some time risen. Her first thought, on starting from her bed, was to look for Mr. Hamilton's note, which she recollects she had dropped from her hand in the first moments of her astonishment at reading its mysterious contents. She wished to re-peruse it, as she remembered the peculiar manner in which the note concluded, where her father said, he now *used* the name of Hamilton; implying, that it was not the one that properly belonged to him.

What Colonel Ross had said of his *pretending* to be a gentleman, and his former assertion, that he remembered his being tried for swindling, recurred to her remembrance, and helped to increase her perplexity. As she sought for the note, her eagerness to re-peruse it increased. What then was her consternation and dismay when, having spent about half an hour in the search, she was obliged to yield to the conviction that the paper was no where to be found. At first her terror was excessive, as the loss was as unaccountable as it was unfortunate. That the note had been conveyed out of her room, during her sleep, was evident, but by whom was a point it was impossible to determine; and whoever was in possession of that paper was master of the secret it contained. When, however, Fanny reflected that the note had been placed upon her table by an invisible hand, she concluded that the same person had resumed it whilst her sleep had enabled them to do so unperceived. It was, however, an unpleasant circumstance to be at the mercy of, a being who could enter her chamber at any hour they pleased, and even without her knowledge. She now recalled to mind the circumstance that occurred the first time she spent the holidays at Pemberton Abbey, when she had been awoken in the night by the appearance of her mamma Sydney, at her bed-side.

The pains that had been taken to convince her that the apparition was the creature of her own imagination, or the effect of a dream, had never been able to eradicate the impression it had made upon her mind, and she still retained the most perfect remembrance of the circumstance. She recollects, too, the mysterious way in which the visitor disappeared, and the pains Lady Ellincourt had been at to ascertain whether or no there was any private entrance to the apartment Fanny slept in; the result of the

investigation had been a conviction that there was no such thing, and that there was no communication from that room but through the door that led to Lady Ellincourt's apartment. The recent occurrence of the note having been placed upon her table, and afterwards removed by the same invisible hand, proved the fallacy of Lady Ellincourt's researches, and she now felt convinced that her infantine ideas, respecting Pemberton Abbey being the place of her earliest residence, were perfectly correct. These reflections strengthened her reliance upon her newly-found parent; and she longed for the arrival of the important moment, which was to reveal the secret of her birth, hitherto so darkly enveloped in mystery.

The hour of breakfast now approached, and Fanny repaired to her toilet to arrange her dress, and to remove, as much as possible, the traces of emotion and trouble which had been impressed upon her countenance. She succeeded tolerably well, and descended to the breakfast parlour with a face dressed in smiles.

Lady Maria was already there, and as soon as Fanny entered she called out, with a good-humoured laugh, "Great news! important news in the *London Gazette*!"

"What news, dear Lady Maria?" asked Fanny, eagerly.

"Miss Stanhope is married, and the town talks of nothing else!"

Fanny's countenance fell instantly, as Lady Maria finished the sentence. "She is no longer Miss Stanhope then," said she, "but the Dutchess of Albemarle."

"Oh, no," answered Lady Maria, "you are not at all in the secret; Amelia is married, but not to the Duke; and there is the mighty wonder of the story." Lady Maria then read, from the newspaper she held in her hand, the chief of those circumstances that have already been related respecting Amelia's *coup-de-main*. The artifice of substituting deeds drawn in Sir Everard Mornington's name for the marriage articles, instead of those that had been drawn up for the Duke, was particularly dwelt upon by the newspaper wits, who styled Lady Mornington Napoleon in petticoats.

Fanny felt comparatively indifferent to any of the particulars, but that which spoke of the rupture of the contract between Amelia and the Duke; that news was doubly welcome now, as her imagination had already been expatiating in the field of probability,

and fondly fancying, that when her birth was ascertained, it might be found such as did not preclude the possibility of the union her heart was most inclined to wish for.

Of Amelia's partiality for Sir Everard Mornington, Fanny had been long convinced ; and she rejoiced that her friend's ingenuity had supplied her with the means of so dexterously substituting the man she did like, for the one for whom she had always expressed the most decided aversion. The means had, indeed, been such as Fanny could not have adverted to ; but the contrast in the dispositions of herself and her friend was striking in almost every other particular, and therefore it was not surprising that they differed in this.

When Col. Ross came in to breakfast, he said, 'Are there any letters this morning?'

'Oh dear,' replied Lady Maria, 'I declare I was so taken up with the newspaper that I forgot the letters ; here are several,' added she, 'and amongst them two for you, Fanny.'

When Fanny took the letters into her hand, she recognized the writing of her beloved Lady Ellincourt on the superscription of the first she looked at. An exclamation of joy burst from her lips at the welcome sight, and she retired to one of the windows to peruse her treasure. What was her rapture then on reading the following words :

'I know you will rejoice, my beloved Fanny, to hear that we shall soon embrace you. We have taken our passage on board a ship of war, and are waiting for a convoy. We shall therefore, in all probability, soon follow this letter. The distracted state of this country renders a longer residence here extremely dangerous. You may therefore depend upon soon seeing us.'

Fanny could read no farther, but running up to Lady Maria, she put the letter into her hands, then burst into tears.

'What is the matter, my dear?' said Lady Maria, in a tone of alarm.

'Nothing but joy,' replied Fanny, smiling through her tears. 'My best friends are returning. I shall embrace them once more. I think all happiness comes together.'

As Fanny pronounced the last words, Colonel Ross cast a penetrating glance towards her, that confused her.

'Have you any other *great* cause for rejoicing?' said he. 'I hope you rest your dependance upon sure grounds.'

Fanny made no reply, but opening her other letter, she pretended to be deeply engaged with that. It was from Lady Mornington, and written in her accustomed style of giddiness. After recounting the particulars of her manœuvres, which are already known, she wrote as follows :

'What does my dear Fanny think of my skill as a General? Should you not suppose that I had studied under the auspices of the little Corsican? Indeed I am inclined to think I *surpass* him in finesse; and in *stage* effect my drama is unrivalled. I always told you I meant to dramatize Lady Heron's song; and so I have you see. Sir Everard made an excellent young Lochinvar, and he carried me off in the true style of romance. A barouche was substituted for the steed, and that was rather an improvement, as I should not have very well relished the being jumbled upon the crupper of a horse, like fair Ellen of Netherby, although I felt quite as much inclined to play the heroine as she could. And I must tell you who played their part to the life, too; your friend the Duke of Albemarle was quite at home in the character of the "*Poor craven Bridegroom*," for he literally said "*never a word*." And although he could not stand "*dangling his bonnet and plume*," because he had not got one, he found an excellent substitute in his watch, which he took out about ten times in a minute, and consulted with as much gravity as if he was feeling the pulses of all the company. I believe if any body could have done that kind office slyly, they would have found some symptoms of *fever* in two or three of the *bridal throng*; poor Lord Somertown in particular. I really thought the old fellow would have beaten me. You never saw such a turkey-cock in your life as he looked, when I made my *daring declaration*; and the good Bishop too, he was preciously angry, and read me such a lecture upon levity as would have done me good at any other time. But, you know, the preaching prudence to a person who has just married against her friends' consent, is like a physician prescribing for a dead patient. I dare say poor Albemarle had a sound drubbing when his old uncle got the *child* home. By the bye, I think the Duke carries his ideas of subordination a little too far, for he is as much afraid of offending Lord Somer-

town as any school-boy of his pedagogue. I hope, when you have him, you will teach him to be a little more independent; but tameness is unfortunately your failing as well as your lover's, and so I am afraid you will make but a spiritless couple. I believe we must take compassion upon you, and give you a few lessons in the science of independence. Sir Everard and I are going to write a book, in concert, and the title is to be, "Nature Reversed; or the Spirit of England." By this treatise we intend to emancipate the minds of our readers from the silly trammels of prejudice and custom, and show that children ought to command their parents, tutors, guardians, &c. servants their masters, and wives their husbands; nay, even the brute tribe will find their advantage in this benevolent publication, as it will teach a valuable method of training *rats* (a certain young nobleman, *it is said, has made this valuable discovery, that rats fed upon live kittens and milk, are a match at close fighting for the stoutest cat that can be found!!!*) to kill *cats*, and thereby deliver that injured part of the creation from the persecution they have hitherto groaned under. Don't you long to read our learned labour. But, my dear, it will take so long composing, revising and correcting, that you must wait longer than I fear you will like. But, however, you shall not remain uninstructed *all* that tedious period. We intend passing the *honeymoon* at this place, namely, Mornington Park, in Lancashire; and in our way from hence to London we design to *favour* you with a visit *en passant*, and then we shall see what we can make of you. I make no doubt you will receive a visit from the Duke of Albemarle long before that time; if you should, pray don't forget to tell him, with my compliments, that I never saw him look so *animated*, as when he blessed me and thanked me, at parting, for *running away from him*. Adieu.'

Thus concluded this giddy epistle, and Fanny could not forbear laughing at her lively friend, although her heart did not entirely acquit her of the levity attributed to her conduct by the worthy prelate who had lectured her.

CHAPTER XXVII.

An affecting Interview.

FANNY's anxiety to have the mystery of her birth elucidated, made the day appear particularly tedious that intervened between her impatience and the hour appointed by Mr. Hamilton for their nocturnal meeting; yet, as the moment approached, she felt dismayed, and almost unequal to the undertaking. A thousand times was she on the point of making Lady Maria her confidant, yet something withheld her from doing so, although the secret trembled on her lips. The idea of meeting a stranger alone at the dead hour of the night, and confiding herself to his guidance, to be led she knew not whither, had something truly terrific in it; yet such was her eagerness to penetrate the mystery that involved her, and such her instinctive reliance upon Mr. Hamilton's integrity, that she kept her resolution of meeting him, notwithstanding the well-grounded fears that assailed her. Her stifled emotions, however, made her extremely absent; and Colonel Ross remarked it several times, in the course of the day, with some asperity. Once, indeed, he observed in a sarcastic tone, that Fanny appeared as full of abstraction as if she were on the eve of some *important event*.

‘One would imagine,’ said he, ‘that you were going to be married. Pray is the Duke of Albemarle, or Mr. Hamilton, the happy object of your contemplations? Or is it your old friend Lord Ellincourt?’

‘I have been thinking of them all in their turn,’ replied Fanny, with a spirit that surprised herself.

‘A confession,’ exclaimed the colonel. ‘And pray,’ added he, drily, ‘if I *may* ask, who is your *nocturnal* visitor? Is it either of the gentlemen just alluded to?’

Fanny's confusion at this abrupt question was extreme, and she was wholly at a loss for an answer: at length, recovering herself

in some degree, she said, 'As I don't know what visitor you allude to, I cannot satisfy your curiosity, sir, as to their identity.'

'I perceive,' replied the colonel, 'that you understand the art of *evasion*: but that is natural to your sex. However, take my advice, if you will not answer my questions: Beware how you trust yourself to the mercy of a man of whom you know nothing but the specious exterior; and remember that repentance treads close upon the heels of imprudence.' So saying, Colonel Ross went out of the room, and left Fanny to form what conjecture she pleased, as to the extent of his information.

Sometimes she was ready to imagine that he knew of Mr. Hamilton's mysterious note; but she instantly rejected the idea, because that note had been but a short time in her own possession, and must have been conveyed away by the same means it had been brought thither. Some secret way of entering her chamber was evidently possessed by Mr. Hamilton, and with that it was impossible Col. Ross could be acquainted.

At length the important hour arrived, and Fanny retired to her apartment, and sat with a palpitating heart, expecting her mysterious visitor. The large clock over the stables had struck twelve some time, and yet he did not appear.

As the moment seemed to approach, Fanny's courage expired; and to such a pitch of terror had her perturbed imagination wrought itself, that she was just on the point of flying to Lady Maria's apartment for refuge from the appearance she now dreaded, when a crackling noise behind her made her start and turn round. A large looking-glass was fixed in the jamb between the window and the chimney; its old-fashioned frame, curiously wrought, forming the cornice of the compartment, appeared to have been stationary in that spot ever since the building of the house, as many of its rude ornaments corresponded exactly with the antique cornice that bordered the ceiling. The part of the wall where the glass was fixed appeared perfectly solid, not being covered like the other parts with wainscoting. How great, then, was Fanny's astonishment, when she saw the frame open like a door, and Mr. Hamilton entering from the aperture. He advanced towards her, and took her trembling hand:

'Be not dismayed, my precious child,' said he, tenderly; 'you

are in the guardianship of your best friend. I can allow for this terror, however: it is very natural that your tender nature should be alarmed at the appearance of a mystery that involves the approaches of your parent. But there is reason for the caution, as you will readily allow when you have heard my eventful story. Fear not to trust yourself to my guidance. I will lead you to the friend of your infancy, and I doubt not that her testimony will do away every remaining doubt.'

Fanny passed through the secret door in silence, and her guide replaced and shut it with a spring, then resuming the hand of the trembling girl, he led her, without speaking, down a long flight of narrow stairs, which terminated in a long passage, so excessively low and narrow, that it was difficult, in many parts, for Mr. Hamilton to pass; but Fanny's sylph-like form glided through its most acute turnings with ease, whilst her agitated feelings made her movement rapid as the wind.

At length a door opposed their progress; Mr. Hamilton rapped three distinct times, and presently it was opened, and they entered a small apartment, through which they passed into one of larger dimensions, where there were two candles upon a table.

Fanny now distinguished the face of the person who had let them in, and to her unspeakable astonishment beheld the long-forgotten features of her '*Mamma Sydney*'.

The old lady pressed the trembling Fanny to her bosom, and sobbed aloud.

'And does my dear child recollect me at last?' said she. 'Yes, I perceive you do: those intelligent eyes beam upon me with all your mother's sweetness.'

'But you look terrified, my love,' added the old lady in a tone of tender concern. 'This agitation is too much for the dear child, Orlando,' turning to Mr. Hamilton; 'let her rest herself a little before we ask her any questions.'

Fanny now seated herself on a chair, between Mr. Hamilton and her *Mamma Sydney*, and yielding to the emotions that oppressed her almost to suffocation, she burst into tears. Her two friends suffered her to weep, without interruption, until the violence of her feelings gradually subsided.

The old lady then began to interrogate Fanny as to her recollec-

tion of herself, and those who surrounded her, prior to her being placed at Miss Bridewell's.

Fanny related what she had before said to Lady Ellincourt, the first moment of her visiting Pemberton Abbey, about her Mamma Sydney, whose image was so forcibly recalled to her remembrance by the apartments she had been wont to inhabit with her. She mentioned, too, her terror at seeing her Mamma Sydney in the middle of the night, whilst sleeping near Lady Ellincourt, in the very same apartment she now inhabited, and described the pains Lady Ellincourt took to ascertain whether there was any secret entrance to the room, concealed in the wainscoting, and the result of that investigation. 'I have often tried, since that period,' said Fanny, 'to persuade myself that my terror had proceeded from a dream; but always found it impossible to divest my mind of the certainty that impressed it, of my having seen you, madam. Lady Ellincourt was so thoroughly convinced, from the examination of the apartment, that nobody *could* enter it, excepting through her room, that she always treated my account of your appearance as the effect of fancy, aided by a dream. How often have the conjectures arising from my reflections upon that puzzling subject beguiled me of my rest; and I have been at times almost tempted to believe, that what I had beheld was a supernatural being.'

'The mystery is now cleared up,' replied the old lady, 'as far as relates to the apparition; for I *indeed* appeared to you, and pressed your rosy cheek with my lips, before you were conscious of my approach. That imprudent action awakened you; and the shrieks you uttered imparted the terror I had occasioned you to my own heart.'

'But tell me, dear and honoured madam,' interrupted Fanny, with a look of earnest supplication, 'Oh, tell me who you are; and give ease to my agitated heart, by informing me who I belong to;' and as she spoke she turned her expressive eyes, swimming in tears, upon Mr. Hamilton.

He arose, and taking her in his arms: 'My Emily, my murdered Emily!' exclaimed he, pressing the weeping girl to his bosom; 'yes, thou art indeed my daughter! every feature in that lovely face recals thy sainted mother.'

‘I have then *no mother!*’ faintly articulated Fanny; then dropping on her knees at the feet of her newly found father, she clasped her hands together, and raising her streaming eyes to his face, she exclaimed, ‘Receive, then, most honoured of human beings, the homage of an affectionate heart, that has long panted to embrace its parents. I have only one! Oh, let me then bestow on that one the duty and affection due to both.’

Mr. Hamilton raised the lovely girl and embraced her. ‘What a moment is this!’ said he. ‘Methinks I hold my Emily once more to my bleeding heart! And so I do: for although you, my child, are not named after your unfortunate mother, it is impossible to behold you, and not be struck with your resemblance to her. The name of Fanny was given you in preference to Emily, the better to conceal you from your cruel persecutors. It has had the desired effect; and my child is preserved to bless her doating father; and I shall yet see her assert a right to the rank of her ancestors, and rise superior to the malice of her enemies. But time wears, and I forget that my child is anxious to know the elucidation of the mystery that now veils her birth. The story is mournful; but she, for whose sake your tender heart will weep at the recital, has long ceased to suffer, and we must look for her in the realms of bliss, not in this dreary vale of sorrow and disappointment. Keep this in mind, my love, and let it soften the anguish your filial tenderness must inflict upon you during the recital of the tale of woe.’—

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A mournful Story.

‘**M**Y mother was the sole heiress to an immense fortune, with the title and estates of a dukedom entailed upon her eldest son. Her mother was sister to Lord Somertown; and it was always the

design of that avaricious and vindictive nobleman to unite his son to my mother. She was accordingly kept very much secluded in the early part of her life, to prevent her forming any attachment before Lord Sheldon returned from his travels. This very precaution, however, was the occasion of her doing so; for in the retirement she lived in with her governess, she became acquainted with my father, who was then just inducted into the living of D——, the village adjacent to Canington Park, the seat where my mother resided.

‘Whether the governess countenanced the attachment, I cannot tell; but be that as it may, the consequence was a clandestine marriage; and when Lord Sheldon came home to claim his bride, she confessed herself already the wife of another.

‘It is impossible to describe the rage and fury of Lord Somer-town, when informed of his niece’s delinquency. He vowed the most unrelenting vengeance, and immediately took every step to punish Mr. Evelyn, her unfortunate husband, and distress Lady Lucy, which was my mother’s name. A process was commenced against him in the Court of Chancery, for stealing an heiress; and although, by the testimony of my mother, it was proved beyond a doubt that the act was entirely her own, and his life thereby preserved, yet the expenses incurred by the law-suit ill agreeing with his narrow circumstances, he was thrown into prison, where he languished the remaining years of my mother’s minority. Nor was her confinement less rigid than her husband’s, as she was kept a close prisoner by her inexorable guardian, and every motion strictly watched, lest she should convey any assistance to my father.

‘My birth, which happened a few months after the discovery of the fatal secret, increased my mother’s distress; and the terror lest I should fall into the merciless hands of her uncle, nearly proved fatal to her during her lying-in. I escaped the jaws of the lion, and was conveyed by a faithful servant of my mother’s to a safe asylum.

‘My father had a sister who was married to a Mr. Hamilton, but who, together with her husband, was abroad at this trying moment. To her my father had written an account of every thing relating to his unhappy marriage, excepting his pecuniary embar-

rassments; a gaol being preferable in his eyes to the idea of dependence. His pathetic description of Lady Lucy's situation, and his account of Lord Somertown's cruelty, alarmed his sister, and she wrote immediately to a friend she could rely upon, and desired her to find means to inform my mother that there was a friend, she might safely trust, ready to receive her child, should she wish to place it out of the reach of her cruel uncle.

' My mother most thankfully embraced the offer; and I was accordingly torn from my weeping parent's bosom, and conveyed to the asylum that had been prepared for me.

' Lord Somertown was outrageous when he found his victim had escaped him; and he spared no pains nor expense to find out my retreat. In this, however, he was disappointed, for my watchful friend had me conveyed to my aunt, at Jamaica, as soon as my tender age admitted of my undertaking such a journey. There I remained until my mother came of age, at which period she effected her escape from the confinement in which she had been kept upwards of four years.

' The first use she made of her liberty was to restore that of my father; and they were re-married at St. George's, Hanover-square, in the most public manner possible. The immense fortune to which they now acceded promised them every enjoyment this life can afford; but all their pleasures seemed imperfect whilst separated from their beloved child.

' My aunt, at this time, returned to England, and came to reside at this very house.

' In this place I was first conscious of the embraces of my parents, and had I no other reason, that single recollection would endear Pemberton Abbey to my heart. I was soon however removed to the splendid seat of my ancestors, and became the prime object of solicitude to all those that surrounded me. And I must here candidly confess, that had the sunshine of prosperity continued unclouded, the very essence of my being would have been lost in slothful insanity of mind, and the best feelings of my heart stifled by a selfish regard to my own convenience. But I was intended for a life of trial, and my sufferings commenced at an early period. My mother, who had always been extremely delicate, died when I was no more than twelve years old, and my father

was immediately involved in a Chancery suit, by a claimant to the estate and title to which I was lawful heir. Lord Somertown's malice to my mother, which survived her, induced him to support the claim of this pretender: and as his lordship had taken care to destroy the evidences of Lady Lucy Darnley's first marriage with Mr. Evelyn, which had been celebrated with all its proper forms, and the banns regularly published, by suborning the clerk to tear the leaf containing the register out of the church books, the marriage could not be proved; and I was bastardized by my own mother's uncle, and our cause fell to the ground. My father's grief and distress may be imagined. It took such an effect upon his health that he survived my mother only two years. Destitute as I now was of fortune and rank, I yet never wanted a friend; my uncle, Mr. Hamilton, received me into his house, and treated me like his son, and from that time I assumed his name. A secret hope always pervaded my mind that Lord Somertown's heart would be touched with remorse for his injustice to me, and that he would restore me to my just rights, by permitting the man to return who had been sent abroad by his means, and whose testimony, as a witness to the marriage, would have been sufficient to reinstate me in the privileges he had deprived me of.

' In this expectation, however, I was deceived; his malice still pursued me: and although he did not know that I had assumed the name of Hamilton, nor had been able to ascertain what asylum sheltered me, his endeavours to penetrate the mystery never relaxed, until a report of my death being industriously spread by my friends, his lordship rejoicing in the extinction of his enemy, deemed himself happy in the consummation of his wishes. The present Duke of Albemarle's father was then the possessor of my just rights; and Lord Somertown, who stood in the same relationship to him as to my mother, was afterwards appointed guardian to his son, the present duke, by his will made on his death-bed. Of my relationship, or connection with Mr. Hamilton, Lord Somertown heard nothing, as he had always been too proud to investigate my father's family; and the report of my death precluded suspicion. I grew up, therefore, in the neighbourhood of his family seat, without his ever entertaining an idea of my exist-

ence. When I was about nineteen, I came home for the summer vacation from Oxford, and Mr. Hamilton received me with more than usual satisfaction in his countenance.

"I am far from despairing," said he, "of seeing you restored to your just rights, if your inclinations should lead you to second my wishes; but remember, before I communicate what those wishes are, I disclaim all intention of putting the least force upon your affections."

"I was at a loss to guess what this prelude was to lead to; but my good uncle soon put the matter past a doubt, by telling me that Lord Somertown had a granddaughter that resided with him, who was the most beautiful creature he ever beheld, but whose birth was attended with such circumstances of misfortune, that it is but too probable his lordship may find it difficult to marry her to his satisfaction. "You," added my uncle, "are supposed to be my son; your fortune in that case must be immense. Lord S. does not suspect who you really are, and as no reasonable objection can be made either to your family or fortune, in your present character, I intend to propose the alliance, provided you should be as much enchanted with the lovely Emily as I am. If you are accepted, it will be an agreeable surprise to Lord S——— to find, when you have married his granddaughter, that you are the lawful heir of such rank and fortune as that which certainly belongs to you, nor do I entertain a doubt that he will immediately produce such proofs as will reinstate you in your rights."

"This scheme appeared so romantic, and my dislike to Lord Somertown was so deeply rooted in my heart, that I could scarcely have patience to hear my uncle to the end of his speech. When he paused, I said, "You leave me free to do as I like, my dear sir; and therefore I decline having any thing to do with such a wretch as Lord S———. Let him keep his malice, and leave me my resentment. I could not love a granddaughter of his, I am sure, were she as beautiful as Hebe." Vain boast! of the fallacy of which I was soon after made sensible. The lovely Emily was kept in such seclusion, that it might almost be styled captivity; all the privilege she enjoyed, beyond the state of a prisoner, being the liberty of walking sometimes in her grandfather's park; and even that indulgence was restricted to an early hour in the morning.—

During these rambles she was attended by the governess who had brought her up, and who doted upon her. It chanced one morning in the shooting season, that I strolled near the precincts of Sheldon Park ; my dogs sprung a covey of partridges, who, in their flight, made towards a small enclosure adjoining to the park gate, the interior of which was screened from my view by a plantation of young trees. With the eagerness of a young sportsman I discharged my gun, and was preparing to climb the fence in search of my game, when loud shrieks from within filled me with consternation and dismay. I scarcely knew how I got to the spot from whence they proceeded ; but when I reached it, my terror was increased, rather than diminished, for I beheld a female figure stretched on the ground, covered with blood, and apparently lifeless, whilst another was bending over her in an agony of terror not to be described. I too plainly perceived that *I* was the unfortunate cause of the accident, and I hastened to offer my assistance to the distressed lady. She raised her head to thank me, and discovered a countenance in which was drawn the strongest picture of grief I ever beheld.

“ My beloved child,” exclaimed she, “ is wounded, I fear mortally ; let me entreat you, sir, to assist me in conveying her to the Porter’s Lodge, which is not far from hence.” I stooped to lift the young lady from the ground ; her hat had fallen off, and her face was shaded by her redundant locks ; but when, with the assistance of the elderly lady, I raised her from her lowly bed, heavens ! what a beauty struck my senses. Pale as she was, with dishevelled locks, and her garments stained with the crimson stream of her blood, yet was she the most lovely object I had ever beheld. My heart died within me, as I bore the lifeless burden to the place her governess had pointed out to me, for I firmly believed she had breathed her last. When we reached the Porter’s Lodge, the lovely Emily (for it was herself) was laid upon a bed, and a man dispatched on horseback to fetch the nearest surgeon, a distance of three miles. I will not pretend to describe the agony I suffered during the time the sweet girl remained in a lifeless state—I stood, the very image of despair, close to the door of the chamber in which she was laid, waiting the sentence of my future happiness or misery. At length I had the unspeakable joy of hearing the delightful exclamation from her attend-

ants, that she revived; and shortly afterwards my rapture was increased by the silver tones of her own sweet voice, inquiring where she was. Her governess then came to me, and assured me that Miss Hincheliffe (that was the name my Emily bore) was much better, and that she could venture to pronounce, without seeing the surgeon, that the wounds she had received were of no material consequence.

‘ My joy was now as extravagant as my grief had been acute, and I was almost in a delirium, from the excess of the emotion I had suffered. When the surgeon arrived, his testimony confirmed Mrs. Bolton’s favourable opinion, for he pronounced the wounds, which were in the fleshy part of the arm, not at all dangerous, and assured us, that the fainting-fit, in which the lovely Emily had lain so long, was occasioned by terror more than by loss of blood.

‘ Time will not permit me to dwell on the events that followed this accident, by which I was introduced to the arbitress of my fate, and became enamoured of the very woman I had declared to my uncle I could never love.

‘ The distress I had shown on this occasion, excited an interest for me in the heart of the beauteous Emily. At first, the excuse of inquiring after her health, and entreating her to forgive the injury I had so unwittingly done her, served to apologize for the liberty I took in way-laying her morning rambles. By degrees she appeared to expect my visits, and soon ventured gently to reproach my negligence, if by any accident I was later than usual in making my appearance. Mrs. Bolton, who longed for the emancipation of her pupil from the tyranny she groaned under, gave every encouragement to my addresses, and by this imprudent act laid the foundation for the future misery of the person she loved best in the world. To be brief, our attachment was mutual, and we exchanged vows of unalterable fidelity to each other. I now entreated my uncle to make the proposal to Lord Somertown he had before suggested, explaining to him, at the same time, the cause of this sudden change in my opinion. My uncle shrugged up his shoulders and sighed.

“ How perverse is human nature!” said he, “ what is attainable we always despise, whilst those things that are beyond our reach are generally the objects of our wishes. At the time I proposed

the alliance to you, there appeared to be no impediment to the union ; you then were averse to the proposal, and I let the subject drop, little supposing you would happen to wish to renew it at a moment when I am convinced it is impossible. Lord Somertown's inflexibility to all endeavours at thwarting his will is almost proverbial ; whatever he has said shall be, is like the laws of the Medes and Persians, 'which altereth not.' An attempt, therefore, to turn him from his designs is really akin to madness. I have just learnt, from undoubted authority, that there is an alliance for his granddaughter now on the *tapis* ; the lover is Lord Ballafyn, of Ballafyn Castle, in Ireland. And as he has never seen the lady, it must be the fortune the grandfather has promised her, that is the object of his affections." I was struck dumb by this intelligence, and almost ready to sink into the ground. As soon as I had recovered myself a little, however, I entreated my uncle not to let a vague report, which might originate in the fertile brain of some gossiping match-maker, deter him from making the proposal I was now so eager about ; adding, with all the sanguine confidence of a youthful lover, that as my fortune exceeded that of Lord B. it was more than probable, if money was Lord Somertown's object, he might be inclined to favour my suit in preference to his lordship's. My uncle shook his head ; but, nevertheless, promised to make the application. He did so, and was rejected in the most positive terms by Lord Sonaertown, who assured him that Miss Hincheliffe was disposed of already. "She knows nothing of my intentions, as yet," added his lordship, sternly ; "but it is time enough : when she knows my will, she *must* obey it. I am therefore in no doubt about what *she* may think of the proposal. Her business is to *obey*, not to *question*." When my uncle conveyed this fatal news to me, my agony was beyond expression, and it was a long time before I could give utterance to my feelings. When I did speak, it was only to renew my vows of never marrying any body but Emily. My uncle entreated me to abandon all ideas of so mad an intention, and recalled to my remembrance the sorrows of my unfortunate parents, as well as those of the hapless Emily. This argument had no effect, however, with me ; misery appeared in no way so certain as in a separation from her I loved ; and could I but obtain the object of my affection, the world

appeared a cheap price to pay for such an inestimable treasure.—When I had an opportunity of conversing with Emily, and imparting my sentiments to her upon our cruel situation, it was some consolation to me to find her as willing as myself to brave the frowns of the world, and the dangers of poverty, rather than relinquish the sweet hope of being united. The same romantic affection inspired us both, and under its dangerous influence we acted so as to entail irremediable evil on ourselves and our offspring. Lord Somertown had not the least suspicion of our attachment, and imagined that my uncle's proposal, whose son he supposed me to be, had been made for the alliance with a view of aggrandizing his family. This unfortunate blindness on Lord Somertown's part was but too favourable to our secret correspondence, and we continued to meet without hinderance or suspicion. At length the dreaded proposal was made, in person, by Lord Ballafyn, and his lordship introduced to Emily, who was informed by her grandfather, that she must look upon his lordship as her future husband, without a single question being asked her, whether he was agreeable to her or not.

'The day after this dreadful meeting, my beloved Emily appeared in such distress and terror of mind, that it drove me almost to madness, and in the insanity of the moment I proposed a clandestine marriage to her. There is not, said I, any danger of our union being set aside, if we can once accomplish it, as I am of age; and it will be easy to get the banns published without Lord Somertown's knowledge, who never goes to church. Emily listened to me with complacency, and I soon prevailed with her to consent to the measure, which was immediately adopted. I gave a very large sum of money to the clergyman, and also to the clerk, and by that means obtained the secrecy I wished for. The former had a great impediment in his speech, which defect he managed so dexterously as to render our names totally unintelligible to the congregation. Our being asked in church was unnoticed, a circumstance that was considerably assisted by several other couples being asked at the same time. Not long afterwards, during a short absence of Lord Somertown from Sheldon Park, we were married, and fondly flattered ourselves that we were now safe from the tyranny we dreaded. Alas! we had for ever riveted the chains

that bound us, and given our enemies a power to hurt us they could not otherwise have possessed. About three months after our marriage, Emily received orders to prepare herself to become a bride, and she was directed to make the necessary purchases for her nuptials. It was in vain that the poor girl implored her inexorable parent to listen to her for a few minutes; he spurned her from him, telling her that no reply was necessary on her part, as she had nothing to do, now she knew his will, but to obey it.—“Lord Sheldon,” said he, “is coming from Saxony, whither he had been sent on a diplomatic mission; and when he returns, your marriage will take place immediately. Lord Ballafyn intends being here the latter end of this month, and I desire, as you value your future happiness, to clear up that dismal countenance, and receive him in a manner suitable to my wishes.”

“Poor Emily could make no reply to this peremptory command, but quitting the room as fast as her trembling limbs would permit her, she sought the refuge of her own chamber, and there, on the bosom of her faithful friend, Mrs. Bolton, she poured forth the anguish of her heart. The terror and agitation the sweet girl suffered on this trying occasion, brought on a most alarming illness, and for many days her life was despaired of. Think what must have been my sufferings when I knew that the beloved object of all my hopes, in this world, lay at the point of death, and I did not dare to approach her pillow, to whisper one word of tender consolation in her ear. The kind-hearted Mrs. Bolton did all she could to mitigate my anxiety, and gave me regular information three or four times a day; and every night, during my Emily’s extreme danger, I watched beneath her window, disguised in the coarse frock and slouched hat of a ploughman; who being frequently employed to watch the poachers, excited no suspicion by being seen lurking about in the dead of the night.

“At length the sweet creature was restored to my prayers, and I received the heart-soothing tidings of her safety and amended health. This joyful event was followed by another, which appeared to promise us the confirmation of our happiness; I mean the death of Lord Somertown, which happened suddenly, just before Lord Ballafyn’s expected arrival. I will not repeat the gay visions of happiness that floated on my brain, when I heard of an event so propitious to our hopes of liberty, as I never entertained

a fear that Lord Sheldon could resemble his father so closely as I have since found, to my sorrow, that he did.

* The death of Lord Somertown put a stop to all ideas of the proposed alliance with Lord B—— for some time; and as the new lord was still detained abroad by his diplomatic functions, Emily was left for several months to follow the bent of her own inclination. It may easily be supposed that it was the society of her husband she would seek under such circumstances; and many a half gone hour have we spent together, in these very apartments, whose private communications with Pemberton Abbey had been but lately discovered by a servant of mine, who informed me of it, and showed me the secret spring that closed the mysterious panel. As a reward for so valuable a discovery, I settled fifty pounds a year upon the man, and gave him that small house to live in. And, with the assistance of his wife, and the worthy Mrs. Bolton, whom you have hitherto known by the name of your Mamma Sydney, your beloved mother, in this secluded asylum, gave birth to a lovely infant, who was immediately baptized by the name of Fanny. And such were the precautions adverted to on this occasion, that not the slightest suspicions were awakened amongst the domestics at Sheldon Park, who were all, excepting one confidential servant, wholly ignorant of my Emily's absence. As soon as her weakness would permit, she returned to her home, but you was left here with your nurse, the wife of my servant.

* We now awaited Lord Sheldon's return with the utmost impatience, as we had come to the resolution of declaring our marriage to him at the first interview. Alas! had we known the horrors that would be the consequence of his return, we should have fled to some distant climate, whilst the possibility of flight remained within our power. Such, however, was our infatuation, that we dreamt not of our danger until the dark cloud of irremediable misfortune burst over our devoted heads, and crushed us for ever. But I will not dwell upon this dreadful part of our narrative.

“ As soon as Lord Somertown arrived in London, he wrote to his niece, to inform her that the nuptials, which he was sorry had been so long delayed on *his* account, should be solemnized immediately; and that it was his intention to be at Sheldon Park in ten days from the date of his letter,

‘ When Emily communicated this unwelcome news to me, my mind suggested the propriety of immediately informing Lord Somertown of our marriage, and entreating his sanction to it, as I judged it would only exasperate him the more, to suffer him to come down in the country under such erroneous ideas.

‘ I accordingly wrote to him on the subject, with an eloquence that would have moved any heart but his own. His answer was couched in terms the most friendly, and contained only a very slight stricture upon secret marriages, which he said were but too often the cause of much unhappiness in families; adding, that he hoped ours would not prove of that description. His lordship requested my immediate presence in London, as he said it was necessary we should have some conversation together, previous to his visiting the country, and he concluded his letter with every assurance of the most cordial friendship.

‘ This was so much above my hopes, that I was in ecstasies, and my Emily was several times obliged to check my transports. Indeed, her apparent apathy soon moderated my joy, for I saw she did not seem to exhilarate as I did; and if any thing *could* have made me angry with that angel, I should have been so on that occasion; for I was disappointed at her coldness.

‘ Alas! her’s was a presentiment of evil, which the subsequent events too soon justified.

‘ To be brief, I tore myself away from the dearer part of my soul, and commenced my ill-fated journey full of the most pleasing expectations, little imagining I had seen my Emily for the last time. When I arrived in London, I waited upon Lord Somertown immediately, and was received with the utmost cordiality. As soon as the first compliments were over, I began speaking upon the subject of the settlements; and as my uncle had authorized me to do, I made the most liberal offers. Lord Somertown seemed rather to evade than press the subject; and he once said, with rather a mysterious air, “ There are some circumstances with which I am acquainted, that perhaps you do not suspect are known to me; on some future day we will talk upon those matters, as I should wish the *real* rank of the man my niece marries should be known to the world.” I caught at this insinuation, and assured his lordship, that from that moment I could have no secrets with a friend.

so nearly allied to me. "Not now," said he, nodding significantly, "but the time is not far distant when the confidence will be mutual."

There was something in Lord Somertown's manner of pronouncing these words that did not please me; yet, as I could not make any objection to what he said, I was obliged to be silent.

I wrote an account of this interview to my adored Emily, and also to my uncle. A few days after this I received a note from Lord Somertown, requesting me to dine with him at his villa, on the banks of the Thames, near Richmond, as he had some business to transact with me of the utmost importance. I obeyed the fatal summons with alacrity, and reached the appointed place just as dinner was ready.

Lord Somertown welcomed me by a cordial shake of the hand, assuring me that I had made him happy by this ready compliance with his request. "And I trust," added he, with a smile, "that you will confess, before we part, that I am not your debtor. Every thing is arranged for your future welfare in a manner that cannot fail of success." I understood by this speech, that Lord Somertown alluded to my claims on the title and estates of Albemarle, and I expressed my warm sense of his kind attention to my interest.

"Say not a word about it," answered he; "you cannot judge *how much* you are obliged to me, until you know what I have done for you.—The dinner waits, let us defer business till that is over." I followed the *fiend* into the dining parlour; we dined *tete-a-tete*; but as the servants waited, not a word passed during dinner. After the cloth was removed, I adverted to the subject of our former correspondence; but Lord Somertown pressed me to take some wine with such eagerness, that I could not refuse: glass after glass was forced upon me, which I swallowed much against my inclination, merely to get rid of his importunity.

I did not at first perceive that Lord Somertown was not drinking himself, for my mind was so occupied with the ideas that crowded upon it, that I had scarcely any perception of what was passing before me. When, however, I *did* observe it, I declined drinking any more.

"Your lordship," said I, laughing, "has a design upon me, for you are making me drink, whilst you are abstaining from wine yourself." "There may be reasons," answered he, "that may render it more necessary for you to take wine, than would stand good for me: however, I believe you have taken enough," added he, emphatically, "and therefore you may do as you like about having any more."

"There was something very mysterious in Lord Somertown's manner, but as I had no suspicion of his malice to me, it excited my curiosity without alarming me.

"After conversing for some time longer upon indifferent subjects, and studiously avoiding the one I wished to lead to, Lord Somertown, after looking earnestly at his watch for some minutes, suddenly started up—"It is time," said he, "to drop the mask of dissimulation; the drug I have administered must have taken effect, and I should lose half my vengeance if my victim remained in ignorance of the hand that inflicted the blow.

"As Lord Somertown spoke, I involuntarily rose from my chair, and a vague presentiment of the truth came over my mind, at least of Lord Somertown's malice to me; for I thought he had administered poison in my wine. I was mistaken—death was too merciful a doom to be awarded by the monster to the man he hated; the drug was intended to render me inanimate, and, by suspending my powers, to make me the easy victim of his deep-laid scheme. Too certain in its effects, I already felt the all-subduing influence creeping over my frame; and whilst horror and resentment struggled at my breast, my unnerved limbs trembled beneath my weight, and almost refused to sustain me, whilst I listened to the sentence pronounced by my arch enemy.

"Know," said he, in a voice trembling with rage and guilt, "know, unhappy wretch, that I am acquainted with your origin; yes, I am informed that you are the offspring of that proud beauty who scorned my proffered love, and of my detested rival, whose insidious arts made her forget her duty, and rendered her blind to the superior merit that sued for her affection. My father hated your parents, and I inherit his hatred with his title. Your mother eluded my vengeance by death—your father also escaped me; but their offspring is mine, and I shall have glorious revenge. I

see your senses are becoming torpid through the influence of the drug you have swallowed, I will therefore hasten to inform you that you are doomed to live, but to exist in such a state of wretchedness, that death would be a mercy. Remember, your misery flows from *me*: Oh! forget not that circumstance, or I have but half my vengeance. Your wife, too, my degenerate niece, who has dared to unite her fate to that of the enemy of her family, shall have an equal portion of suffering. Let that reflection gall you, and add to the anguish of perpetual slavery. The manner of her punishment I will not tell you, for suspense and doubt aggravate affliction of every kind. Know this only, she shall *wed another!*

' The drug had begun its operation indeed, and a torpor not to be resisted was creeping over my whole frame; yet when Lord Somertown pronounced the last fatal words, "she shall wed another," my expiring senses were awakened, and the fury that transported my soul inspired one last effort of strength. I flew, and seized the collar of my insulting foe; but whilst I held him struggling in my grasp, he contrived to stamp with his foot, and several of his creatures came to his assistance. I was easily secured, for the short-lived energy had already subsided, and my stiffening limbs and stupified senses overpowered me more than the united strength of the bravoës.

' From this moment I remembered nothing more, until I found myself confined in a narrow inconvenient recess, which appeared intended for a bed; but the cruel way in which my hands and feet were manacled, prevented me from stretching myself upon it, *so* as to obtain any rest. Impenetrable darkness enveloped me; but the constant splashing of water close to my head, convinced me that I was upon the sea, in some vessel, destined by my persecutor to convey me far from that happy land where unjust imprisonment is forbidden by the laws.

' At first I was at a loss to account for my wretched situation, but by degrees my recollection returned, and the dreadful truth flashed on my awakening senses. It is surprising to me at this moment that frenzy did not seal my wretchedness, for I remembered the dreadful words, "she shall wed another;" and in the agony they excited, I attempted to tear off the manacles that confined me. The effort I made was attended with so much noise, that it brought one of the ship's crew to my little cabin.

"What's in the wind now?" exclaimed he, in a rough tone.— "You had better be quiet, my hearty; you will be worse off if you don't mind what you are about: and considering the crimes you have been guilty of, it is no great matter."

"Crimes!" reiterated I, "what crimes can possibly be laid to my charge, who never injured any one?"

"You did not do what you wished to do," replied the tar; "but that was no thanks to you."

"Tell me, I entreat you," said I, "of what am I accused?"

"Oh, you have forgot it, have you?" answered he. "That's comical too, by jingo. Well, then, I'll rub up your memory a bit. Don't you remember when you attempted to kill your uncle, Lord Somertown?"

"I attempted to kill Lord Somertown!" interrupted I. "Heavens, what a falsehood! I never even dreamt of such a thing."

"Why, as for that, you know best," replied the tar; "but it argues very little now to deny it. I should think it rather unlikely such a thing should be invented of an innocent man: but the short and the long of it is, that your uncle says you did so; and out of compassion to you, and to save the disgrace of having you hanged, he had you conveyed on board our vessel, whilst you were dead drunk. For when you found your wicked intention was frustrated, you took a quantity of laudanum, in hopes to escape your deserts; but it was not enough to kill you: and as the affair was blowed, you must have been prosecuted if your good uncle had not sent you beyond seas. We shall land you as soon as we find a convenient place, for we don't want the company of murderers in the *Blithe Betsy*, I can assure you; but we will take care it shall be where you are not likely to get away from it again."

"The agony of my mind at this intelligence may easily be imagined. At first I gave way to despair, and vented my anguish in exclamations of sorrow; but recollecting how fruitless was such weakness, I determined to subdue it. Whilst life was spared me, escape was not impossible; and when I thought upon the cruel situation of my beloved Emily, it awakened such an ardent desire to rescue her, that it gave a supernatural strength to my mind, and supported me through the severest of trials."

‘ As soon as my informer could be prevailed upon to listen to me, I told my plain unvarnished tale, and laid open to the honest seaman a train of iniquity that shocked his simple nature. He, who had been taught to hate me as a murderer, now pitied me as an oppressed victim of the blackest treachery.

‘ He determined upon my deliverance, with all the ardour of increased benevolence, and unloosing the manacles that confined me, as a pledge of his future services, he bade me be of good cheer, for that he was certain his captain, who, though rough as the element he ploughed, was generous and humane, would scorn to be the implement of oppression in the hands of a tyrant like Lord Somertown. He had been prevailed upon to take charge of me for a large reward, under the supposition that he was doing an act of mercy to a culprit who merited death, by giving him a chance of living to repent of his crimes, at the same time he was saving a noble family from the stigma of being allied to a felon.

‘ As soon, therefore, as my new friend, Jack Thomson, had repeated my melancholy story to him, and removed the prejudice that had hitherto kept him from speaking to me, I was ordered into his cabin, and received from Captain Armstrong the credit my narrative deserved. From that moment I was free, and treated with the same kindness as his chief mate, who was also his nephew. The generous Armstrong was, however, bound to the coast of Africa; and as I was eager beyond expression to return to England, that I might ascertain the fate of her who was dearer to me than life, he kindly promised to put me on board the first vessel we should meet with, bound to my native shore. “ And when you get there, my friend,” said he, “ keep close under hatches, or hoist false colours to deceive the enemy, until Roger Armstrong returns to his moorings; then never fear but we will work him pretty tightly. Your testimony will argufy nothing without a witness; you had better therefore be mum till you can *jaw* him to some purpose.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

An affecting Story continued.

‘ Two days only had elapsed, after this promise, before a vessel spoke to us, consigned to London. The terms of my passage homeward were soon agreed upon, and paid for by the generous Armstrong, who also supplied me with a small sum for my present emergency, and took leave of me with the kindness of a brother, recommending the greatest caution in concealing myself from Lord Somertown, whose determination to destroy me could not be doubted, and who would now have double reason to wish my extermination. I thanked him, and promised to attend to his advice: I therefore purchased a complete sailor’s habit, and thus disguised might have passed my nearest friend without suspicion.

‘ These precautions were, however, of little avail, for as we were sailing with a fair wind, and within a few leagues of our native land, we were attacked and captured by a French vessel, of such superior force as made all resistance on our side vain.

‘ My story, in this, presents but little variety. A prisoner, unaided by money, undistinguished by apparent rank, I suffered the severest hardships; nor could I procure my exchange, although I wrote several letters to my uncle, Mr. Hamilton, describing my situation, and entreating his assistance. To these letters I received no answer, and four tedious years rolled away in hopeless captivity. At length two of my fellow-prisoners, whose fortunes appeared as desperate as mine, proposed to me to attempt an escape. We did so, and succeeded; and after encountering perils that would have disheartened minds less determined upon emancipation, we landed upon a lonely part of the coast of Sussex, having been several days buffeting the waves in an open boat, without provision, without a compass, and in momentary danger of perish-

ing from hunger and fatigue, even if we escaped the stormy ocean.

‘ The joy so naturally the consequence of such an escape was considerably diminished in my breast, by the dread that seized me, as I reflected upon the forlorn state in which I left my beloved Emily, when I was torn from my native land by her barbarous uncle. My heart died within me as I thought upon what she might have suffered, and tears and sighs succeeded to the effusions of joy that broke forth at my first landing.

‘ My fellow-sufferers and I were relieved from the pressure of our hunger and nakedness, by a benevolent gentleman, whose hospitable mansion received us for one night. This amiable man, whose vicinity to the sea-side exposed him to frequent applications from shipwrecked mariners, was the greatest philanthropist on earth. He dedicated the chief of his fortune to the relief of his fellow-creatures; and always kept warm coarse clothing in his house, to bestow upon the half-perished creatures that were so often thrown upon his mercy by the storm and tempest. Clad in a complete suit of this comfortable apparel, and supplied with a small sum for my present necessities, I took leave the next morning of my benevolent host, and pursued my journey towards the metropolis, so much disguised in my appearance, that, had not hardship and long-suffering already altered my countenance, it would have been impossible for any one to recognise me.

‘ When I arrived in London, I made several inquiries concerning the family of Lord Somertown, but could learn nothing more than that he was in good health; for little was known at those places where I could venture to inquire, concerning the interior management of his family. I did not, therefore, make any stay in town, but hastened to reach my native home, not doubting that I should find all the relief I stood in need of as soon as I reached my reputed father’s house. Alas! how miserably was I disappointed when I arrived there, weary and almost sinking with fatigue and sorrow, to find it shut up, and to hear the heart-breaking intelligence from the only domestic that inhabited the forlorn pile, that grief for the loss of his only son had affected Mr. Hamilton’s health and spirits so severely, that he had quitted England, and was gone to reside abroad entirely.

‘I had nearly sunk on the ground when I heard the cruel tidings ; but fearful of making a discovery of myself, at a moment when concealment was become more important than ever, I commanded my emotions therefore, and inquired whether this little mansion was still inhabited by the same person that occupied it five years before ; the servant answered in the affirmative, and I bent my footsteps hither. Without discovering myself, I inquired of my faithful servants if they knew what was become of Mrs. Bolton ; at first they hesitated, but Franklyn happening to look earnestly in my face, uttered a scream, and exclaimed, “Good heavens ! can it indeed be my beloved master ?” Disguise was now useless, and I acknowledged myself to him, entreating him to be prudent, and not let my arrival be suspected. He promised to obey my commands ; and after having forced me to take some refreshment, he satisfied my curiosity without easing my heart.

‘I then found that Mrs. Bolton was the secret inhabitant of Pemberton Abbey, where she acted the part of a mother to my beloved child. “Oh show me to her,” said I, “she can tell me something of my adored Emily, whose beauteous image I am dying to embrace.”

“Alas ! alas !” said the faithful Franklyn, “the news Mrs. Bolton can tell you of Lady Emily will not give you pleasure.—Would to God you were never to hear it !” This speech only rendered me more impatient to hear my doom :—“What is there ?” exclaimed I, “that can surpass what my own terrified imagination now suggests ?” To be brief, I was introduced through the subterraneous passage into the Abbey, and left in one of its desolate apartments, whilst Franklyn went to prepare Mrs. Bolton for my reception.

‘The good woman came to me with streaming eyes, and spreading out her arms, embraced me with the affection of a parent. For some minutes her sobs choked her utterance ; but as soon as she could speak, she exclaimed, “Oh ! my friend ! you have come too late to save our Emily !” “She is dead then !” said I, sinking into the seat that stood nearest me. “Oh no, she is not dead ; death would have been a mercy compared to the anguish she has suffered.” “Tell me, oh tell me the worst,” said I ; “my mind is prepared for horror.”

"Your Emily is *married* then," answered she, whilst a torrent of tears burst from her eyes. "She is married, or rather tied, to a tyrant whose cruelty no sweetness can soften, no gentleness subdue."

"My agony was now without bounds, and for several minutes I was in a paroxysm of rage and distraction. At first view of my unfortunate situation, I was inclined to throw some blame on Emily. "Ah, where," exclaimed I, "was that faith so often pledged to me? that love which she so solemnly had vowed should never change? Surely, had they existed with their wonted firmness, no threats, no persuasions, could have induced her to renounce me! She would have preferred death to such an infidelity!"

"Blame not that faultless creature," replied Mrs. Bolton, "for she is a martyr to the most exalted virtue; and her affection for you, her undying tenderness for your memory, could not be more strongly proved than by the action that made her the wife of Lord Ballafyn. She had been imposed upon by an account of your death; and when sunk in the affliction that belief entailed upon her, the preservation of the dear pledge of your love alone could rouse her to any regard for what was passing in a world she no longer wished to remain in, but for the sake of that sweet innocent: what then must have been her agony when she was informed, by her cruel uncle, that he held her darling in his power, and that a compliance with his proposals, and implicit obedience to his commands, could alone insure its safety! The wretched mother listened with horror to the dreadful alternative; the dissolution of soul and body could not have inflicted a severer pang than that which wrung her heart, when obliged to choose between the sentence of death for her infant, or misery for herself. Maternal tenderness triumphed, and the lovely victim was led to the altar in mute agony to seal her wretched doom, and complete the triumph of diabolical revenge.

"Before the inauspicious nuptials, however, she insisted upon the possession of her child, which was accordingly delivered to her, and by her confided to my care, with the most solemn injunction to conceal it in some place of security from the knowledge of Lord Somertown, whose vengeance she still dreaded, and on whose

promises, she could place no reliance. My knowledge of the secret inlet to Pemberton Abbey, made me choose that asylum, and Mr. Hamilton's consent being obtained, I retired hither, and during the absence of that gentleman, it has not been supposed any one resided in it but the domestic, to whose care it was consigned: and her superstitious dread of the wing I thus took possession of, secured me against interruption from that quarter.

Where then is Emily, I exclaimed in a tone of agony?

"After her nuptials," replied Mrs. Belton, "the unfeeling wretch, her husband, took her to Ireland; and immured her in an old castle." A few weeks since, I received this; producing a note:—"Accept kind friend, my thanks; but I am obliged to withdraw my treasure, for reasons I dare not name, scruple not to trust it with the person I send, who will tell you a secret known only to us three, and thereby prove her identity. This came through the medium of Franklyn. I am happy you came before her removal, and so saying, the worthy woman led me to the chamber, that contained my lovely child. I will not dwell on that scene! a kind of delirium was the result—In this state I repaired to Ballafyn Castle, Lord B—, by some strange chance discovered me, and I was sent on board a receptacle of misery; a vessel engaged to convey troops to the West Indies. On reaching the place of destination, I was sent to an hospital; where my death was hourly expected. In this extremity, my uncle, the worthy Mr. Hamilton, discovered me amongst other strangers, whom like a good samaritan he came to visit; what a scene followed! by tender care he restored my health, and intended to return with me to England, but his premature disease ended this project; he had secured to me his wealth, and thus was I left rich, but wretched. I received intelligence that my Emily was no more! through the enquiries of Mr. Barlure, one of my trustees; and Mrs. Bolton wrote that my child had been taken to France, by the lady to whom her mother had consigned her; adding, that she feared the letter she received, to give the infant up, was a forgery on subsequently comparing it with others. I repaired to France, and there spent some years in fruitless enquiries; I then returned

on important business to Jamaica, where Mr. Barlowe related to me an account of a friendless girl, who had been placed in a mysterious manner at the boarding school where his own daughter was receiving her education in England, and from corresponding circumstances I hoped I had discovered my long lost jewel; on coming to this country I had this hope confirmed by Mrs. Belton, who described her nocturnal visit to your chamber, after you became under Lady Ellincourt's protection, and she wrote to me; alas! the letter never reached my hand; Lady Ellincourt and her son had left this country; she thought you were gone with them—not so—you remember our first meeting,

"I do indeed, replied the lovely girl; dropping on her knees." "Dear Father receive my assurance, that all my life is devoted to you."

I have little more to relate said he, tenderly embracing her. Convinced you were my daughter, I wrote to Lady Ellincourt; she advises me to be secret till her return, and act cautiously respecting Somertown, who does not suspect my existence, depending on the report of my having died in India; but I had one evening the pleasure of terrifying his guilty mind, by dropping a few words in his ear, and escaped unperceived; Lady Ellincourt is expected every day, and her son has married the amiable Miss Barlowe, to whom you are so much indebted. Go to rest, my child, and may a parent's blessing seal your slumbers; I go to London, and shall see my child no more, till I come to claim her; Mrs. Belton will accompany me. After a tender adieu, Mr. Hamilton conducted Fanny back the same way she had come.

Alas! the next morning all was alarm and confusion, Fanny was missing; and her bed shewed she had not reposed in it on the former night. The Colonel affected the utmost concern, and declared his belief that the girl was gone off with the adventurer, Hamilton; Lady Maria however used every exertion to trace her, but without success, and her husband pleading an urgent letter from Lord Ballafyn, set out for Ireland, notwithstanding Lord Ellincourt was expected every hour.

When he did arrive, his Lordship's surprise and vexation

was terrific, on finding Fanny absent: he openly accused the Colonel to his wife, of being accessory to that young lady's removal, and pronouncing the latter to be the injured Hamilton's daughter, left Lady Maria overwhelmed with sorrow and amazement.

Fanny on taking leave of her father, and returning to the apartment, cast herself on her knees. Some one knocked at the pannel, she imagined it to be her parent, returned to say something he had omitted, and arose and opened it, when she was seized by two men, and torn off; her mouth gagged to prevent her cries being heard, and conveyed her to a carriage, the blinds of which were closely drawn up; accompanied by a man and a woman, who appeared man and wife, and called each other Franklyn and Mabel. From their conversation when they supposed her in a slumber, she had no doubt but Colonel Ross was the author of this outrage, which most probably originated in Lord Somertown's malice, and the recollection of the note she had lost, and which she had forgot to mention to Mr. Hamilton, made her imagine that his existence was known to them; and her agony of mind was frequently excruciating. Mabel seemed to pity her, and took an opportunity of their being a few moments alone to say, go quietly to your place of destination, and you will not be hurt, and it shall go hard, but I will send somebody after you to fetch you home in a crack, I am sorry that I had any thing to do with it, now I see you so unhappy.

On the second day Fanny was prevailed on to take some wine, which no doubt contained a powerful sudorific, for on awakening, as if from a deep slumber, she found herself in a miserable cabin, round a turf fire, on the hearth stood six squalid looking children, a crock was on the fire full of potatoes, and near her was a large jug of buttermilk, she felt the reality she was indeed in Ireland. Mabel was not there, not having crossed the water with them; and the men who were on guard over our house, opened a basket of provisions on the table, the children set up a cry, and the mother began to drive them forth. Fanny begged the man to let them remain, and share what provision they could spare to these famished little ones, and she would

reward them, some was offered to the mother.—No, said she, suffer the children to eat it all, it does me more good to see them, than to feast myself; pleased with this trait of genuine maternal love, Fanny, unperceived by her keepers, took a piece of gold from her pocket. The man of the hut coming with a car he had been sent for, obliged the poor girl to quit a hut she seemed to revere, because there was a humane woman in it. Whilst the men were busy in arranging the car, Fanny slipped the gold in the woman's hand, blessings on you, lady, cried she with fervour. I am no lady replied Fanny, but a destitute girl! Then said the Dame, (offering the money back,) you shall not rob yourself to aid us, though this would pay our rent, and—Stop, said the interesting fair one, I am not destitute of money, but of friends, let me have your prayers—I am too far from home!

Is that the case sweet jewel: you shall have prayers and friendship too, my husband, Dermot, shall protect you. Franklyn entered the hut, and Fanny made a sign to her new ally to say no more, which was understood: but she followed to the door, and wished the lady a safe journey. The men walked on each side, and Dermot, her promised friend, guided the only sorry horse that drew the vehicle, and in spite of her troubles, she could scarce help smiling at the idea of his, a ragged peasant's, protection against her powerful enemies.

The day was closing when they arrived at a very ancient castle, the gates were opened by an old man, who conducted them through a court yard, which led to a inner range of buildings, where an elderly stern looking woman made her appearance, who bid Fanny welcome to Ballafyn Castle, thus confirming the suspicion she had previously entertained. You seem ill miss, said she, but my Lord has ordered you every possible attendance.

Did she mean Lord Ballafyn, thought Fanny, surely not: he could have no interest in a person he had never seen, but the woman withdrew without perceiving her emotion! This was then the scene of her mother's sufferings, and could the walls speak, might perhaps tell a tale of murder. This woman and her husband had the care of the castle, and their niece, Rose,

waited on Fanny with great civility and attention, but she could derive no intelligence from her, and was kept in strict captivity. On Lord Ellincourt's return to London he agonized Mr. Hamilton's feelings with the intelligence of Fanny's loss, and most active and vigilant measures were resorted to, in the hope of tracing the involuntary fugitive. The grief of the Dowager Lady Ellincourt and her daughter-in-law was extreme, they had always loved Fanny, but more so on discovering her near relationship to the family. On Lord Ellincourt and Mr. Hamilton going to Lord Somertown's, they were informed by the porter, that his Lordship had been for two days past visited by a delirious fever, and did nothing but roar about the Duke of Albemarle, whom he said was gone to Ireland to be married to a nameless girl, and wants to break from his attendants to follow them.

His Lordship and Mr. Hamilton looked at each other, and the former asked to see the invalid's valet, and were shewn into an adjacent library. As they were sitting there, a shrewd looking elderly man, in plain but good clothes entered, and took an easy chair. Servant, gentlemen, servant, said he, nice soft seat this ; yet I wonder whether the old Lord ever found himself easy in it, eh !

We are not acquainted with his Lordship, said Mr. Hamilton, no loss that, replied the stranger—Rum Jockey, wants people not to talk about him, yet won't pay to make one keep a secret—dont you take—No, then I'll tell you : sent me to sea many years ago—at this moment the valet entered, and begged to know Lord Ellincourt's commands.

Stay, said the stranger, has my Lord sent me any message. My Lord is ill, Mr Fortescue, said the man, I have already told you, you must wait.

Wait, wait another day through ! Old one fetch him sooner ! —Ask pardon gentlemen, perhaps you have got some secrets to tell.

We, said Mr Hamilton, attracted by his manner, we have one to ask ; I have lost a daughter whom I have reason to suspect, is detained by Lord Somertown, and I will grant pardon to any accomplice who will discover where she is.

Five hundred pounds for telling a secret, when I only asked

a thousand pounds for keeping one,—Well, well, give me your card, and see if I can help you, said the talkative Mr. Fortescue. What, said he, looking at the card, Hamilton of Pemberton Castle!—will call on you in an hour, and tell something that will make your hair stand on end! What, about my child? said the alarmed Father. No, replied the oddity, about one nearer a kin to yourself to be sure, and he darted from the room. The valet who appeared much confused and distressed, during the foregoing scene, assured them he knew nothing about the young lady, and saying his Lordship would require his attendance, withdrew.

The gentlemen then went to the Duke of Albemarle, and found that his Grace was unexpectedly gone to Ireland.—He went, said the man, to Pemberton Castle, and met something there to cause this sudden movement, as he has wrote to his valet, to join him in Dublin. This is a strange business, said Mr. Hamilton,—even so, answered Ellineourt, but I will follow Ross even to the end of the world, and demand the amiable girl I placed under his protection. We must make preparations to start for Ireland immediately.

Mr. Fortescue was true to his promise—let me ask you, sir, are you old Mr. Hamilton's son of Pemberton Abbey? No, sir, answered Hamilton emphatically, thought so, first moment I saw you—There are some papers to sit the lawyers to work, but you must down with the blunt; He then went on to explain his father had been a clerk in the parish where Hamilton's father and mother were married, and to please the late Lord Somertown, had got out of the way when the marriage was wanted to be proved, and took with him the register, which he tore out of the book, but did not burn it, as he had promised. Keen old man, lived to be ninety, heard I was come to England, continued Fortescue,—sent for me only a few weeks since, the present Lord Somertown thinking there was no heir, behaved shabby, would not continue the annuity. Now resolved to be upsides with him, gave me the box, something, said he, to make your fortune, Tom. Lord Somertown sent for me a little while back, and tried to smooth me over; he had heard something or other to alarm him—would not do, but you, Tom, can make some-

thing of the secret one way or other, the leaf of this book will be known to be right, when compared with the others, but to make all secure I will make an affidavit before the present vicar of the parish, as to the hand writing of him who solemnized the marriage. This he did in revenge for Lord Somertown's treatment, (when he supposed he did not want him) and you may have it for some gold.

If, said Hamilton, I am so happy as to find my daughter again, I might assert my rights for her sake; but then I have no proof of my own marriage with Lady Emily. Know, said Fortescue, that I am your man; my real name is Thomas Hobford. I was too cunning ever to let Lord Somertown know I was the son of the man his father had pensioned, so took another name. I was one of the gardeners at your reputed father's—sent me off to India, there eighteen years before I could get off—What think you of me now?—that you have acted a rogue's part—I will accept your offer, and pay your demand, if my — has not fallen a victim to the wretches who surround her. Oh no! returned Fortescue, she's only off with Albermarle—heard old Somertown swearing about it. Hamilton then took Fortescue's address, bidding him not to tamper with the enemy. No, no, said he, better understand trap, than know how to make a bargain—shall look about me, and pick up news against I hear from you.

In the meantime Fanny remained at Ballafyn Castle, and Rose became very much attached to her, but was of necessity the companion of her walks, as she was not permitted to go out alone or beyond certain bounds.

This seems to be a very ancient place, said Fanny, surveying the Castle, yes, Miss, returned the girl, I wish they would pull it down, and build a more fashionable dwelling, this is only fit for the Ghosts that inhabit it.

Ghosts! are there Ghosts in it? said Fanny.

Oh yes, Miss! and not only in the castle, but in that rock straight before us, the late Lady Ballafyn walks in white every moonlight night! Old Matthew, the gardener has seen her many a time, though she has been dead these fifteen years, for my part I take care never to look, for I should die with fright;

and there was a handsome young man, whom they say my Lord killed through jealousy, and he walks about the castle very often, with a lighted taper in his hand.

Do you remember her Ladyship ? said Fanny. No, replied Rose. She was dead before I came to Ireland with my Aunt, who had known Lady Ballafyn very well, when she (my Aunt) lived at Lord Somertown's.

This observation seemed to point out to poor Fanny, that though Lord Ballafyn's name had been mentioned, she was in Lord Somertown's power, and as she gazed on the dark battlements, she heaved a sigh to the memory of her unfortunate mother, who had breathed her last in this horrid castle.

When Fanny retired for the night, the moon was shining full, she stationed herself at the gothic window, regarding with stedfast gaze the rock, that was such a scene of terror to Rose—Did her eyes deceive her ?—there was indeed a figure robed in white, with a long veil wrapped by the breeze. Suddenly it dropped on its knees, and raised its hands to heaven, then rising up, suddenly disappeared !

Fanny knew not what to think, she mentioned not the circumstance to Rose, lest she should refuse to walk with her near the spot, which the next morning at early dawn the resolved to visit. Rose however would not proceed directly to the rock, but seated herself on a fragment at a small distance.

Fanny mounted, and then descended to what she thought the exact place, which had excited her interest. Mysterious Providence ! the same figure was there, but partially concealed in a fissure of the rock ; it heaved a deep sigh, and raising a hand, as if forbidding our heroine to follow, disappeared ! The face and form was beautiful, though faded more apparently by sorrow, than time ; and Fanny returned to the Castle absorbed, in a train of thought from which she was roused, by Mrs. Owen's informing her that Lord Ballafyn was arrived, and opening an adjacent door, introduced her ; and withdrew, ere the poor girl had power to resist.

Welcome to Ireland, pretty one, said he, devilish handsome ! Pray how long have you been in keeping with my brother ?—On my honour I admire his taste ; I suppose he has sent you

here out of the way of his wife. I like that vixen look of your's — Consent to live with me ? I can support you better, but we must make the agreement quick, for Ross will be here in a few days ; and we must be off ! Surely I have seen you before ! your features are familiar.

Fanny raised her eyes, and to her terror, beheld the man from whose insults in Hyde Park, Hamilton had rescued her.

Unhand me, my Lord, she exclaimed ! I have friends who will avenge the outrage ! Let me go ?

Not till you have paid toll said his Lordship, seizing her and imprinting kisses on her lips, but she broke from him with almost supernatural strength. Go, exclaimed his Lordship, I hate female hurricanes ! I give you twenty four hours to consider my proposal—you had better take me than Ross—I might marry you on behaving well : that he cannot do.

Fanny retreated to her chamber, and there securing herself in, refused to open the door to any one ; In vain Mrs. Owen and Rose begged her to have food, she would not listen to them, lest another intruder might annoy her, and the door was too strong to be forced. When night arrived, afraid to go to bed, she stood watching at the closet window, and cast her eyes on the rock, as the moon arose over the romantic landscape. Of a sudden she was startled by a letter placed at the end of a long stick being handed to her, she had no light, and summoning courage, she asked in an under tone who was below. It is me Miss Dermot who brought you here in the car ; you saved my pigs from being sold for rent, and I have watched over you since, this letter is from your own sweetheart from England. I cannot read it, said Fanny, never mind then come with me, and read the letter afterwards ; give me your hand, I have a ladder and will help you down, for I am sure you are thin enough to creep through that hole of a window. I must read the note first said Fanny, then it will be too late he replied, come first and read the letter afterwards. At this moment the moon brightened, and she saw it was from Albemarle, assuring her she might put implicit confidence in the bearer. Fanny was soon liberated, and Dermot led her to the haunted rock. Look ye here Miss, said the man ; fifteen years ago I saved a lovely Lady, from be-

ing murdered, here is a private entrance to a religious house, fear half a mile distance, where a few men shelter unknown. I supply them with victuals, and it was I who took Lady Ballafyn there, when she knew not where to fly; it was reported she died, and my Lord was glad, but not so, for all the fine funeral, the maid set off to England, to let Lady Ballafyn's friends know where she was; but poor soul she was drowned in the passage, so I suppose no one knows the secret but myself. It is impossible to describe Fanny's emotions, when listening to this tale of wonder. Dermot removed a large stone, when they were joined at the entrance of a long passage, by a man bearing a torch, it was the Duke, who along with Dermot, conducted her to the friendly nurse, who was anxiously waiting for her, terrified lest Dermot should not succeed. Her first enquiries were for Lady Ballafyn, but before the superior could reply, her Ladyship rushed in and folding Fanny in her embrace, both sunk insensible to the ground; but revived to experience by degrees all the extacy attending such a meeting.

Fanny was not missed at the Castle till the following morning; the prevailing opinion by the servants was that the ghosts had carried her off. Not so Lord Ballafyn, he was distracted with rage, and vowed to shoot every one in the Castle, if she was not produced within twenty four hours. In the midst of this bustle Colonel Ross arrived, he was surprized at finding his brother there before him; he believed not in Fanny's flight! Jealousy maddened them! both fired, and both fell; while sanguine streams of these fratracides dyed the floor.

While this tragic scene was transacting, Fanny and her mother were mutually relating their stories, all of which are known to the reader, except that, when the visit of Mr. Hamilton to the Castle, had excited the jealousy of its Lord, she had reason to believe her death was intended by the tyrant, had not Dermot's intervention prevented the catastrophe. But ah what were Lady Ballafyn's emotions on discovering that he, for whose sake she had endured so much, was still in existence, and also to find in how providential a manner her child had been introduced to the Ellincourts, filled her with gratitude and admiration.

The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the Duke of Albemarle, who gradually announced the tidings of Lord Ellincourt and Mr. Hamilton. They, said his Grace, at first accused me of carrying off their loved Fanny, but I soon convinced them as to my innocence, and Lord Somertown's duplicity, in giving me leave to pay my addresses to you, my lovely girl; when he was aware you would be conveyed from Pemberton Abbey, before my arrival. Here I was so fortunate as to meet with Mabel, who mistaking me for Ellincourt, informed me of the plot in which her husband had been the principal engaged; and at the cabin of poor Dermot I learned the rest of the particulars, necessary for your deliverance, here my mission ends. I shall soon resign you into the hands of a father, but allow me to hope—not for ever!

The discovery of his Emily being in existence, was almost too much for the care worn Hamilton to sustain; nor was it till after a long struggle, that he regained any thing like composure. The interview between the long separated husband and wife, blest with the presence of their child, it is impossible to describe! In a few days the whole party, with the exception of Lady Ballafyn, who now resumed that title, whom it was arranged should remain with the nuns, till the validity of her marriage should be proved. Repaired to England, after having made Dermot and his family, in their humble and grateful estimation, rich and happy. When they reached Pemberton Abbey, and found the two Lady Ellincourt's waiting to receive them, and clasped Fanny in their arms; but poor Lady Maria Ross was seriously ill, and confined to her bed, with the shock, she had received; for she tenderly loved her worthless husband.

In respect to Lord Somertown, he only survived his knowledge of Hamilton's existence a short period. His crimes became known to the world, inspiring horror and detestation. Mr. Hamilton, by the aid of Fortescue, soon settled his business, his marriage, and Fanny's birth, were both proved to be legal, Franklyn, who had received five hundred pounds for his job, set off to America, and his wife in consequence of her after repentance, had an annuity settled on her by the Duke. As soon as these affairs were concluded, Mr. Hamilton, Lord Ellin-

court, and at his own particular request, his Grace of Albemarle set out for Ireland, to escort home the long suffering Emily; and soon after her return to England, the Duke received the hand of her amiable daughter.

The grand saloon of Lady Ellincourt's house was fitted up for the ceremony. The enraptured Albemarle received from the hands of her father his lovely blushing bride, as Heaven's best gift; all Fanny's friends were present, and amongst the rest, the lovely Lady Morington, whose congratulations were as lively as they were sincere. A month having elapsed, the three brides Albemarle, Ellincourt, and Morington were introduced at court, where the Dutchess excited the most flattering attention, and the fashionable world were now eager to attract the notice, and procure an introduction, to the so lately slighted forlorn and fatherless Fanny. The dowager Lady Ellincourt, and her amiable daughter in law, became tenderly attached to the mother of their Fanny, and passed a great portion of their time with her. Albemarle, Ellincourt, and Hamilton were the best of husbands, and the whole circle were as happy as an earthly state will admit.

The deaths of Lord Somertown and Ballafyn were a blessing, particularly the latter, to Mr. and Lady Hamilton; for had they survived, there is not a doubt they would still have strove to annoy their peace. Mr. Hamilton dropped his claim to the Albemarle title and estates, in favour of his son-in-law, and settled with his lady at Pemberton Abbey, along with the dowager Lady Ellincourt; where they were often visited by the Duke and Fanny, whose happiness was greatly enhanced by being with her mother, and conversing on past times and scenes, and the party was frequently most agreeably enlarged by the presence of Lord Ellincourt, and the still lively warm hearted Emily, and many months had not elapsed, when the appearance of that lady and her Grace of Albemarle, held the delightful hope to be not at an immeasurable distance, when both to the duties of a wife, would add that of the mother.

The first grief that assailed this happy circle, was the serious indisposition of the Dowager Lady Ellincourt, she had a very failing heart, which had been much tried by the recent events

in her family. The shocking fate of Lord Ballafyn and Colonel Ross were not amongst the least, and news arriving of the death of Lady Caroline Dermon, a beloved daughter whom for years she had not seen, but was anticipating soon to do ; had a very powerful effect on her weakened frame, and she became so indisposed, that her daughter-in-law, who with Lady Ellincourt was then at Pemberton Abbey, wrote to request the presence of Fanny, to have a parting interview with her they so much loved and respected. The Duke participated in his wife's sorrow at this intelligence, and hasty preparations being made for the journey, he accompanied her on this melancholy errand. On arriving at the Abbey they found the object of their solicitude still existed, but was in eminent danger. On the Duchess being introduced to the chamber, she was shocked at the alterations, but embracing her tenderly, hoped she might yet be spared to them for years to come. That is a cruel wish my dear child, replied the invalid ; if you know how happy I feel at the prospect before me, tears would not obscure that lovely face ; she then joined the hands of the Duke and Duchess, said, may angels above receive your vows ; and bless your nuptial life ! Then also uniting her hands of her son with Lady Ellincourt's, she said, love her Edmund, as she deserves ; you are amiable, but she is worthy of you ! The Duke and Lord Ellincourt tenderly embraced their wives, who returned their caresses with kindred feelings ; and the young people then, at her desire kneeling down, received her solemn benediction, and were dismissed the chamber, as she expressed a wish to rest. Fanny then sought her mother, who had been reluctantly forced to retire, by the absolute command of her husband, and solicitations of her friends, from the bed side of her beloved Aunt ; whom she had attended for the last two nights and days, to take a short repose, but in vain, and she eagerly welcomed her child.

The Dowager fell into such a calm slumber, that it lasted two hours, and inspired favourable hopes. Alas ! it was the prelude of speedy dissolution. She expired in the arms of Mrs. Hamilton, whom she sincerely loved ; exclaiming ! bless you dearest child of a beloved, a murdered brother ; my ever regretted Durham.

Thus expired this excellent woman, whose last moments were rendered still more happy, by the pious consolation of the rector, Dr. Woodward, who on the following Sunday preached an excellent funeral sermon, to the memory of the deceased lady, at which not only every member of her own family attended, but the church was crowded by the parishioners, the majority of whom were drest in mourning, out of respect to one, whose virtues will long be held in remembrance, and held up for example to the rising generation.

Lord Ellincourt who had the highest veneration for his late mother, provided for all her pensioners and domestics, and particularly for Mr. Norris, who had been her butler fifty years, and was now past servitude; for this man he purchased a neat cottage, and a plot of ground, and annexed to it a liberal annuity, which rendered the possessor very happy.

About this time a friend of Lord Ellincourt's arrived from abroad, and brought with him Fanny, the identical little dog of whom his lordship had been so fond. Sir Henry Ambersey had met with the animal in Paris along with John Robertins, who had been accused of stealing some plate from his Lordship, and on being accosted quietly resigned him. The sagacious quadruped on being introduced to Ellincourt, immediately recognised him, and manifested the utmost joy on the occasion.

After a few weeks had elapsed, Pemberton Abbey became once more the scene of festive mirth. Lady Ellincourt presented her Lord with a son and heir; and soon after the Dutchess gave birth to a daughter, as lovely as herself, and the received numerous congratulations on the occasion.

Mrs. Barlowe, the imperious Mrs. Barlowe, after tyranising over all, with whom she had any power, after a series of years, died suddenly of an apoplectic fit. Her worthy husband survived her seven years, and died universally esteemed and respected, especially by Fanny, to whom he had behaved with the most christian-like deportment. Their eldest daughter lived and died abroad, she was a woman who possessed no natural feeling, and therefore had not the least inclination to revisit her native land, or behold the relations and friends of her, childhood; she was happy with her husband; as he begrudged her nothing, and as there was no want of money, there was no

discontent ; each pursuing their own inclinations. The sister the amiable Emily, fully secured the affections of Lord Ellin-court by her tender, obliging assiduities, and the uniform tenor of her conduct. They had several children, and they educated them in the best manner. Our heroine, the charming Fanny, was likewise blessed by Providence with numerous pledges of their mutual love. She was an affectionate mother, and her offspring inherited the virtues of their excellent parents. Would wives be happy like Fanny, let them study to behave as she did. Every man is not a similar character to the Duke of Albemarle, but almost every man might be made to resemble him in a degree, would women conform to their tempers and respect, as it deserves, the matrimonial vow. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton lived many years to enjoy felicity, and thought themselves amply recompensed for former trials in present happiness, and the hope of future bliss. Sir Henry Ambersley shortly married Lady Margaret Noland, a female of distinguished beauty and sense, with whom he was very happy. Lady Mornington, in about a year and a half after their nuptials, presented Sir Everard with twins, a lovely boy and a girl. This couple grew more and more domesticated ; their time was divided between town and country, and their dispositions were such that they derived enjoyment from both. Amelia still preserved the sprightliness that was natural to her character, but was entirely divested of its volubility. Sir Everard totally forsook the pleasures of shooting and the chase, and commenced a rational life. As to the arrogant Miss Bridewell, she continued to reign at Myrtle Grove, and was wisely denominated the female Hector of the place. The pious Dr. Woodward died in a few years, and was interred with all possible respect. The honest Mr. Norris retired to the cottage appropriated for his use, blessing the name of the benevolent donor. He lived in it twenty years, thus reaching the astonished period of a hundred. Here concludes the story of the Lovely Fanny.

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